Gospel Grounds and Evidences OF THE FAITH OF GOD's Elect:

SHEWING

I. The Nature of true saving Faith, in securing of the Spiritual Comfort of Believers in this Life, is of the highest importance.

II. The Way wherein true Faith doth evidence it self in the Soul and Consciences of Believers, unto their Supportment and Comfort, under all their Conflicts with Sin, in all their Tryals and Temptations.

III. Faith will evidence it self, by a diligent, constant endeavour to keep it self and all Grace in due exercise, in all Ordinances of Divine Worship, Private, and Publick.

IV. A peculiar way whereby true Faith will evidence it self, by bringing the Soul into a State of Repentance.

Examine your selves, whether ye be in the Faith, prove your selves, know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you, except you be Reprobates, 2 Cor. 13. 5.

By JOHN OWEN, D. D.

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To the Reader.

AS *Faith is the first vital Act that every true Christian puts forth, and the Life which he lives is by the Faith of the Son of God, so it is his next and great concern to know that he doth believe, and that believing he hath Eternal Life; that his Faith is the Faith of God's Elect, and of the Operation of God, without some distinct believing knowledge of which, he cannot so comfortably assure his Heart before God concerning his Calling and Election, so far as to carry him forth in all the ways of Holiness, in doing and suffering the Will of God with necessary Resolution and Chearfulness, the doing of which in a right manner, according to the Tenor of the Gospel, is no small part of spiritual Skill; whereunto two things are highly requisite:* First, *That he be well acquainted with the Doctrine of Christ, and knows how to distinguish the Gospel from the Law; and,* Secondly, *That he be very Conversant with his own Heart, that so by comparing his Faith, and the Fruits thereof, with the said Doctrine of Christ, he may come to see that as he hath received Christ, so he walks in him; all his reasonings concerning*

himself being taken up from the Word of God, so that what Judgment he passeth upon himself, may be a Judgment of Faith, and Answer of a good Conscience towards God; for all Tryals of Faith must at last be resolved into a Judgment of Faith, before which is made, the Soul still labours under staggerings, and uncertainties.

The design of this ensuing Treatise is to resolve this great Question, Whether the Faith we profess unto, be true or no? the Resolution of which, upon an Impartial Enquiry, must needs be very grateful and advantageous to every one that hath but tasted that the Lord is gracious. That the late Reverend, Learned, and Pious Dr. Owen *was the Author, there needs be no doubt; not only because good Assurance is given by such as were entrusted with his Writings, but also in that the Stile and Spirit running thro' the other of his Practical Writings is here very manifest, and accordingly with them is recommended to the serious perusal of every diligent Enquirer into the Truth of his Spiritual Estate and Condition.*

Isaac Chauncy.

Evidences

Evidences of the Faith of GOD's Elect.

THE securing of the Spiritual Comforts of Believers in this Life, is a matter of the highest Importance unto the Glory of God, and their own Advantage by the Gospel. For God is abundantly willing that all the Heirs of Promise should receive strong Consolation, and he hath provided ways and means for the Communication of it to them; and their Participation of it is their Principal Interest in this World, and is so esteemed by them. But their effectual Refreshing Enjoyment of these Comforts is variously opposed by the Power of the Remainders of Sin, in Conjunction with other Temptations. Hence notwithstanding their Right and Title unto them by the Gospel, they are oft-times actually destitute of a Gracious Sense of them, and consequently of that Relief which they are suited to afford in all their Duties, Trials and Afflictions. Now the Root whereon all real Comforts do grow, whence they spring and arise, is true and saving Faith; the *Faith of Gods Elect*. Wherefore they do ordinarily answer unto, and hold proportion with the Evidences which any have of that Faith in themselves; at least they cannot be maintained without such Evidences. Wherefore that we may be a little useful unto

the Eſtabliſhment or Recovery of that Conſolation which God is ſo abundantly willing that all the Heirs of Promiſe ſhould enjoy, I ſhall enquire, *What are the principal Acts and Operations of Faith, whereby it will evidence its Truth and Sincerity in the midſt of all Temptations and Storms that may befall Believers in this World:* And I ſhall inſiſt on ſuch alone as will bear the ſevereſt Scrutiny by Scripture and Experience. And,

THE Principal Genuine Acting of ſaving Faith in us, inſeparable from it, yea, eſſential to ſuch acting, conſiſts in the *Chooſing, Embracing, and Approbation of Gods way of ſaving Sinners, by the Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, relying thereon, with a renuntiation of all other ways and means pretending unto the ſame End of Salvation.*

THIS is that which we are to explain and prove.

SAVING Faith is our *Believing the Record that God hath given us of his Son,* 1 John 5. 10. *And this is the Record that God hath given unto us, Eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son,* verſe 11. This is the Teſtimony which God gives, that great and ſacred Truth which he himſelf bears witneſs unto, namely, That he hath freely prepared Eternal Life for them that believe, or provided a way of Salvation for them. And what God ſo prepares he *is* ſaid to *give*, becauſe of the Certainty of its Communication. So Grace was promiſed and given to the Elect in Chriſt Jeſus before the World began, 2 *Tim.* 1. 9. *Tit.* 1. 2. And that is ſo to be communicated unto them in and by the Mediation of his Son Jeſus Chriſt; that it is the only way whereby God will give Eternal Life unto any, which is therefore wholly in him, and by him to be obtained, and from him to be received. Upon our Acquieſcency in this Teſtimony,

ſtimony, on our Approbation of this way of ſaving Sinners, or our Refuſal of it, our Eternal Safety or Ruin doth abſolutely depend. And it is reaſonable that it ſhould be ſo: For in our receiving of this Teſtimony of God, *We ſet to our ſeal that God is true*, Joh. 3. 33. We aſcribe unto him the Glory of his Truth, and therein of all the other Holy Properties of his Nature, the moſt Eminent Duty whereof we are capable in this World: And by a Refuſal of it, what lieth in us, we *make him a Liar*, as in this Place, v. 10. which is, virtually to renounce his Being.

AND the Solemnity wherewith this Teſtimony is entred is very remarkable, ver. 7. *There are three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, and theſe three are one.* The Trinity of Divine Perſons acting diſtinctly in the Unity of the ſame Divine Nature, do give this Teſtimony: And they do ſo by theſe diſtinct Operations, whereby they act in this way and work of God's ſaving Sinners by Jeſus Chriſt, which are at large declared in the Goſpel. And there is added hereunto a Teſtimony that is immediately applicatory unto the Souls of Believers, of this Soveraign Teſtimony of the Holy Trinity, and this is the witneſs of Grace and all ſacred Ordinances: *There are three that bear witneſs on Earth, the Spirit, and the Water, and the Blood, and theſe three agree in one*, ver. 8. They are not all eſſentially the ſame in one and the ſame Nature, as are the Father, Word, and Holy Ghoſt, yet they all abſolutely agree in the ſame Teſtimony, and they do it by that eſpecial Efficacy which they have on the Souls of Believers to aſſure them of this Truth. In this Record, ſo ſolemnly to

riously given and proposed, Life and Death are set before us. The Receiving and Embracing of this Testimony, with an Approbation of the way of Salvation testified unto, is that Work of Faith which secures us of Eternal Life. On these Terms there is Reconciliation and Agreement made and established between God and Men, without which Men must perish for ever.

SO our Blessed Saviour affirms, *This is Life eternal, that we may know thee* [*Father*] *the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*, Joh. 17. 3. To know the Father as the only true God, to know him as he hath sent Jesus Christ to be the only way and means of the Salvation of Sinners, and to know Jesus Christ as sent by him for that end, is that Grace and Duty which entitates us in a Right unto Eternal Life, and initiates us in the Possession of it: And this includes that Choice and Approbation of the way of God for the saving of Sinners whereof we speak.

BUT these things must be more distinctly opened.

1. THE Great fundamental Difference in Religion is concerning the way and means whereby Sinners may be saved. From Mens different Apprehensions hereof arise all other Differences about Religion; And the first thing that engageth men really into any Concernment in Religion, is an Enquiry in their Minds how Sinners may be saved, or what they shall do themselves to be saved: *What shall we do? What shall we do to be saved?* What is the way of Acceptance with God? is that Enquiry which gives Men their first Initiation into Religion. Acts 2. 37. Chap. 16. 30, 31. This Question being once raised in the Con-

ſcience, an Anſwer muſt be returned unto it: *I will conſider*, ſaith the Prophet, *what I ſhall anſwer, when I am reproved*, Hab. 2. 1. And there is all the Reaſon in the World that Men conſider well of a Good Anſwer hereunto, without which they muſt periſh for ever: For if they cannot anſwer themſelves here, how do they hope to anſwer God hereafter? Wherefore without a ſufficient Anſwer always in Readineſs unto this Enquiry, no Man can have any Hopes of a Bleſſed Eternity.

NOW the real Anſwer which Men return unto themſelves is according to the Influence which their Minds are under from one or other of the two Divine *Covenants*, that of *Works*, or that of *Grace*. And theſe two Covenants taken abſolutely, are inconſiſtent, and gives Anſwers in this Caſe that are directly contradictory to one another: So the Apoſtle declares, *Rom.* 10. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. The one ſays, *the man that doth the* Works of the Law, *ſhall live by them*; this is the only way whereby you may be ſaved: The other wholly waves this Return, and puts it all on *Faith in Chriſt Jeſus*. Hence there is great Difference, and great Variety in the Anſwers which men return to themſelves on this Enquiry; for their Conſciences will neither hear nor ſpeak any thing, but what complys with the Covenant whereunto they do belong. Theſe things are reconciled only in the Blood of Chriſt; and how the Apoſtle declared *Rom.* 8. 3. The greateſt part of Convinced Sinners ſeem to adhere to the Teſtimony of the Covenant of Works, and ſo periſh for ever. Nothing will ſtand us inſtead in this matter, nothing will ſave us, but the Anſwer of a good Conſcience towards God, by the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt. 1 *Pet.* 3. 21.

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2. THE way that God hath prepared for the ſaving of Sinners is a Fruit and Product of Infinite Wiſdom, and powerfully Efficacious unto its End. As ſuch it is to be received, or it is rejected. It is not enough that we admit of the Notions of it as declared, unleſs we are ſenſible of Divine Wiſdom and Power in it, ſo as that it may be ſafely truſted unto. Hereon upon the Propoſal of it, falls out the eternally diſtinguiſhing Difference among Men. Some look upon it, and embrace it as the Power and Wiſdom of God: Others really reject it, as a thing fooliſh and weak, not meet to be truſted unto; whereof the Apoſtle gives an Account at large, 1 Cor. 1. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. And this is myſterious in Religion; the ſame Divine Truth, is by the ſame way and means, at the ſame time, propoſed unto ſundry Perſons, all in the ſame Condition, under the ſame Circumſtances, all equally concerned in that which is propoſed therein: Some of them hereon do receive it, embrace it, approve of it, and truſt unto it for Life and Salvation; others deſpiſe it, reject it, value it not, truſt not unto it. To the one it is the *Wiſdom of God, and the Power of God*; to the other *Weakneſs* and *Fooliſhneſs*, as it muſt of neceſſity be one or the other, it is not capable of a middle State or Conſideration. It is not a good way, unleſs it be the only way; it is not a ſafe, it is not the beſt way, if there be any other; for it is eternally inconſiſtent with any other. It is the Wiſdom of God, or it is down-right Folly. And here after all our Diſputes, we muſt reſort unto eternal Soveraign Grace, making a Diſtinction among them unto whom the Goſpel is propoſed, and the Almighty Power of

actual Grace in Curing that Unbelief which blinds the minds of Men, that they can see nothing but Folly and Weakness in Gods way of the saving of Sinners: And this Unbelief worketh yet in the most of them unto whom this way of God is proposed in the Gospel: They receive it not as an Effect of Infinite Wisdom, and as powerfully Efficacious unto its proper End: Some are profligate in the Service of their Lusts, and regard it not; unto whom may be applied that of the Prophet, *Hear ye Despisers, and wonder, and perish*: Some are under the Power of Darkness and Ignorance, so as that they apprehend not, they understand not the Mystery of it: *For the Light shineth into Darkness, and the Darkness comprehendeth it not.* Some are blinded by Satan as he is the God of this World, by filling their Minds with Prejudice, and their Hearts with the Love of present things, that the Light of the Glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, cannot shine into them. Some would mix with it their own Works, Ways and Duties, as they belong unto the first Covenant, which are eternally irreconcible unto this way of God, as the Apostle teacheth, *Rom.* 10. 3, 4. Hereby doth Unbelief eternally ruin the Souls of Men; they do not, they cannot approve of the way of God for saving Sinners, proposed in the Gospel, as an Effect of Infinite Wisdom and Power which they may safely trust unto, in Opposition unto all other ways and means, pretending to be useful unto the same End: And this will give us Light into the Nature and Actings of saving Faith, which we Enquire after.

5. The whole Scripture, and all Divine Institutions from the Beginning, do testifie in general that this way of God for the saving Sinners is by Commutation,

mutation, Subſtitution, Attonement, Satisfaction and Imputation. This is the Language of the firſt Promiſe, and all the Sacrifices of the Law founded thereon. This is the Language of the Scripture: There is a way whereby Sinners may be ſaved, a way that God hath found out and appointed. Now it being the Law wherein Sinners are concerned, the Rule of all things between God and them ſhould ſeem to be by what they can do or ſuffer with Reſpect unto that Law: No, ſaith the Scripture, it cannot be ſo; For *by the Deeds of the Law no man living ſhall be juſtified in the ſight of God*, Pſal. 142. 2. Rom. 3. 20. Gal. 2. 16. Neither ſhall it be by their Perſonal Anſwering of the Penalty of the Law which they have broken. For they cannot do ſo, but they muſt periſh eternally: For, *If thou Lord ſhouldſt mark Iniquities, O Lord, who ſhall ſtand?* Pſal. 130. 3. There muſt therefore be, there is another way, of a different Nature and Kind from theſe, for the ſaving of Sinners, or there is no due Revelation made of the mind of God in the Scripture. But that there is ſo, and what it is, is the main Deſign of it to declare: And this is by the *Subſtitution of a Mediator inſtead of the Sinners* that ſhall be ſaved, who ſhall both bear the Penalty of the Law which they had incurred, and fulfill that Righteouſneſs which they could not attain unto.

THIS in general is Gods way of ſaving Sinners, whether Men like it or no: *For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the fleſh, God ſending his own Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for Sin condemned Sin in the fleſh, that the Righteouſneſs of the Law might be fulfilled in us*; Rom. 8. 3, 4. See alſo Heb. 10. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. *He made him to be ſin for*

for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. 5. 21.

HERE Unbelief hath prevailed with many in this latter Age to reject the Glory of God herein: But we have vindicated the Truth against them sufficiently elsewhere.

4. THERE are sundry things previously required, to give us a clear View of the Glory of God in this way of saving Sinners: Such are, a due Consideration of the Nature of the Fall of our first Parents, and of our Apostacy from God thereby. I may not stay here to shew the Nature or Aggravations of them: Neither can we conceive them aright, much less express them. I only say, that unless we have due Apprehensions of the Dread and Terrour of them, of the Invasion made on the Glory of God, and the Confusion brought on the Creation by them, we can never discern the Reason and Glory of rejecting the Way of Personal Righteousness, and the establishing this way of a Mediator for the saving of Sinners. A due Sense of our present infinite Distance from God, and the Impossibility that there is in our selves of making any Approaches unto him, is of the same Consideration; so likewise is that of our utter Disability to do any thing that may answer the Law, or the Holiness and Righteousness of God therein; of our universal Unconformity in our Natures, Hearts, and their Actings unto the Nature, Holiness and Will of God: Unless, I say, we have a sense of these things in our Minds, and upon our Consciences, we cannot believe aright, we cannot comprehend the Glory of this new way of Salvation. And whereas Mankind hath had a general Notion, though no distinct Apprehension of

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these things, or of some of them, many amongst them have apprehended that there is a Necessity of some kind of Satisfaction or Atonement to be made, that Sinners may be freed from the Displeasure of God: But when God's way of it was proposed unto them, it was, and is generally rejected, because the *Carnal Mind is Enmity against God*: But when these things are fixed on the Soul by sharp and durable Convictions, they will enlighten it with due Apprehensions of the Glory and Beauty of God's way of saving Sinners.

5. THIS is the Gospel, this is the Work of it, namely, a divine Declaration of the way of God for the saving of Sinners, through the Person, Mediation, Blood, Righteousness and Intercession of Christ. This is that which it revealeth, declareth, proposeth and tendreth unto Sinners; there is a way for their Salvation. As this is contained in the first Promise, so the Truth of every word in the Scripture depends on the Supposition of it. Without this there could be no more Intercourse between God and us, than is between Him and Devils. Again, it declares, that this way is not by the Law or its Works; by the first Covenant, or its Conditions; by our own Doing or Suffering; but it is a new way found out in, and proceeding from Infinite Wisdom, Love, Grace and Goodness; namely, by the Incarnation of the Eternal Son of God, his Susception of the Office of a Mediator, doing and suffering in the Discharge of it whatever was needful for the Justification and Salvation of Sinners, unto his own eternal Glory: See *Rom.* 3. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27. Chap. 8. 3, 4. 2 *Cor.* 5. 19, 20, 21, *&c.*

MOREOVER, the Gospel adds, that the only way of

of obtaining an Interest in this Blessed Contrivance of saving Sinners, by the Substitution of Christ, as the Surety of the Covenant, and thereon the Imputation of our sins to him, and of his Righteousness unto us, is by *Faith in him*.

HERE comes in that Trial of Faith which we Enquire after: This way of saving Sinners being proposed, offered and tendered unto us in the Gospel, true and saving Faith receives it, approves of it, rests in it, renounceth all other Hopes and Expectations, reposing its whole Confidence therein.

FOR it is not proposed unto us meerly as a Notion of Truth, to be assented to or denied, in which Sense all believe the Gospel that are called Christians; they do not esteem it a Fable: But it is proposed unto us as that which we ought practically to close withall, for our selves to trust alone unto it for Life and Salvation. And I shall speak briefly unto two things.

1. *HOW doth saving Faith approve of this way?* on what Accounts, and unto what Ends.

2. *HOW it doth evidence and manifest it self hereby unto the Comfort of Believers.*

First, IT approves of it, *as that which every way becomes God to find out, to grant and propose*: So speaks the Apostle, Heb. 2. 10. *It became him in bringing many Sons to Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through Sufferings.* That *becomes* God, is *worthy* of him, is to be owned concerning him, which answers unto his infinite Wisdom, Goodness, Grace, Holiness and Righteousness, and nothing else. This Faith discerns, judgeth and determineth concerning this way, namely, that it is every way worthy of God, and answers

ſwers all the holy Properties of his Nature: This is called the *Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Chriſt Jeſus*, 2 Cor. 4. 6.

THIS Diſcovery of the Glory of God in this way is made unto Faith alone, and by it alone it is embraced. The not diſcerning of it, and thereon the want of an Acquieſcency in it, is that Unbelief which ruines the Souls of Men. The Reaſon why Men do not embrace the way of Salvation tendred in the Goſpel, is becauſe they do not ſee, nor underſtand, how full it is of Divine Glory, how it becomes God, is worthy of him, and anſwers all the Perfections of his Nature. Their Minds are blinded, that the Light of the Glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, who is the Image of God, doth not ſhine into them, 2 *Cor.* 4. 4. And ſo they deal with this way of God, as if it were Weakneſs and Folly.

HEREIN conſiſts the *Eſſence* and *Life* of Faith. It ſees, diſcerns and determines, that the way of Salvation of Sinners by Jeſus Chriſt propoſed in the Goſpel, is ſuch as *becometh God* and all his divine Excellencies to find out, appoint and propoſe unto us. And herein doth it properly give Glory to God, which is its peculiar Work and Excellency, *Rom.* 4. 20. Herein it reſts and refreſheth it ſelf.

IN particular, Faith herein rejoyceth in the manifeſtation of the infinite *Wiſdom* of God. A View of the Wiſdom of God, acting it ſelf by his Power in the Works of Creation, (*for in Wiſdom he made them all*) is the ſole Reaſon of Aſcribing Glory unto him in all natural Worſhip, whereby we glorifie him as God; and a due Apprehenſion of the infinite Wiſdom of God, in the new Creation, in the way of ſaving Sinners by Jeſus Chriſt

Christ, is the foundation of all Spiritual, Evangelical Ascription of Glory to God.

IT was the Design of God in a peculiar way to manifest and glorifie his *Wisdom* in this Work. Christ crucified is the *Power of God*, and *the Wisdom of God*, 1 Cor. 1, 24. And all the Treasures of *Wisdom and Knowledge are hid in him*, Col. 2. 3. *All the Treasures of Divine Wisdom are laid up in Christ*, and laid out about him, as to be manifested unto Faith in and by the Gospel. He designed herein to make known his *manifold Wisdom*, Ephes. 3. 9, 10.

WHEREFORE, according to our Apprehension and Admiration of the Wisdom of God in the Constitution of this way of Salvation is our Faith, and no otherwise. Where that doth not appear unto us, where our Minds are not affected with it, there is no Faith at all.

I cannot stay here to reckon up the especial Instances of Divine Wisdom herein. Somewhat I have attempted towards it in other Writings, and I shall only say at present, that the foundation of this whole work and way, in *the Incarnation of the Eternal Son of God*, is so glorious an Effect of Infinite Wisdom, as the whole blessed Creation will admire to Eternity. This of it self bespeaks this way and work divine. Herein the *Glory of God shines in the face of Christ Jesus*. This is of God alone; this is that which becomes him, that which nothing but infinite Wisdom could extend unto. Whilst Faith lives in a due Apprehension of the Wisdom of God in this, and the whole Superstruction of this way, on this foundation it is safe.

GOODNESS, Love, Grace and *Mercy*, are other Properties of the Divine Nature, wherein it is glo-

only amiable. *God is Love: There is none good but he*: Grace and Mercy are among the principal Titles which he every where assumes to himself; and it was his Design to manifest them all to the utmost in this work and way of saving Sinners by Christ, as is every where declared in the Scripture; and all these lie open to the Eye of Faith herein: It sees infinite Goodness, Love and Grace, in this way, *such as becomes God*, such as can reside in none but him, which it therefore rests and rejoyceth in, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. In Adherence unto, and Approbation of this way of Salvation, as expressive of these Perfections of the Divine Nature, doth Faith act it self continually.

WHERE Unbelief prevaileth, the Mind hath no view of the Glory that is in this way of Salvation, in that it is so becoming of God and all his holy Properties, as the Apostle declares, 2 *Cor.* 4. 4. And where it is so, whatever is pretended, Men cannot cordially receive it and embrace it; for they know not the Reason for which it ought to be so embraced: They *see no Form nor Comeliness in Christ*, who is the Life and Center of this way, *no Beauty for which he should be desired*, Isa. 53. 2. Hence, in the first Preaching of it, it was *unto the Jews a Stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks Foolishness*; For by reason of their Unbelief they could not see it to be what it is, the *Power* of God, and the *Wisdom* of God, and so it must be esteemed, or be accounted Folly.

YEA, from the same Unbelief it is, that at this day the very Motion of the Truth herein is rejected by many, even all those who are called *Socinians*, and all that adhere unto them, in the Disbelief of Supernatural Mysteries: They cannot

ſee a *Suitableneſs* in this way of Salvation unto th Glory of God, as no Unbeliever can; and there fore thoſe of them who do not oppoſe directly the Doctrine of it, yet do make no uſe of it, unto its proper End. Very few of them comparatively who profeſs the Truth of the Goſpel, have an Experience of the *power of it* unto their own Salvation.

BUT here true Faith ſtands invincibly, hereby it will evidence its Truth and Sincerity in the midſt of all Temptations, and the moſt diſmal Conflicts it hath with them; yea, againſt the perplexing Power and Charge of Sin thence ariſing: From this ſtrong hold it will not be driven; whilſt the Soul can exerciſe Faith herein, namely, in ſteadily Chooſing, Embracing and Approving of Gods way of ſaving Sinners by Jeſus Chriſt, as that wherein he will be eternally glorified, becauſe it is ſuited unto, and anſwers all the Perfections of his Nature, is that which every way becomes him, it will have wherewith to relieve it ſelf in all its Trials. For this is Faith, this is ſaving Faith, which will not fail us; that Faith which works in the Soul a gracious Perſwaſion of the Excellency of this way, by a ſight of the Glory, of the Wiſdom, Power, Grace, and Love, and Goodneſs of God in it, ſo as to be ſatisfied with it, as the beſt, the only way of coming unto God, with a Renunciation of all other ways and means unto that End, will at all times evidence its Nature and Sincerity.

AND this is that which gives the Soul Reſt and Satisfaction, as unto its Entrance into Glory upon its Departure out of this World. It is a great thing to apprehend (in a due manner, that

a Poor Soul that hath been Guilty of many Sins, leaving the Body it may be under great Pain, Diſtreſs and Anguiſh, it may be by outward Violence, ſhould be immediately admitted and received into the Glorious Preſence of God, with all the holy Attendants of his Throne, there to enjoy Reſt and Bleſſedneſs for evermore. But here alſo Faith diſcerns and approves of this great, of this ineffable divine Operation, as that which becomes the infinite Greatneſs of that Wiſdom and Grace which firſt deſigned it, the glorious Efficacy of the Mediation of Chriſt, and the Excellency of the Sanctification of the Holy Spirit, without any Expectation from any thing in it ſelf, as a Cauſe meritorious of an Admiſſion into this Glory: Neither did ever any man know what it is, or deſire it in a due manner, who looked for any Deſert of it in himſelf, or conceived any Proportion between it and what he is or hath done in this World. Hence ſome of thoſe who have not this Faith have invented another State after Men are gone out of this world, to make them meet for Heaven, which they call *Purgatory*: For, on what Grounds a man ſhould expect an Entrance into Glory on his Departure out of this World, they underſtand not.

LET them who are exerciſed with Temptations and Dejections, bring their Faith unto this Trial. And this is the Caſe in various Degrees of us all. *Firſt* then, Examine ſtrictly by the Word whether this be a true Deſcription of the Nature and Acting of ſaving Faith. Sundry things are ſuppoſed or aſſerted in it, as, (1.) That the way of ſaving Sinners by Jeſus Chriſt, is the principal Effect of Divine Wiſdom, Power, Goodneſs, Love and Grace. (2.) That the Deſign of the

Gospel is to manifest, declare and testify that so it is, and so to make known the Glory of God therein. (3.) That saving Faith is that Act, Duty and Work of the Soul, whereby we receive the Record of God concerning these things, ascribe the Glory of them all unto him, as discovering it in the way of Life proposed unto us. (4.) That hereon it proceeds unto a Renunciation of all other Ways, Means, Hopes, Reliefs, in Opposition unto this way, or in Conjunction with it, as unto Acceptance with God in Life and Salvation. I say, in the first place Examine these things strictly by the Word, and if they appear to be (as they are) Sacred, Evangelical, Fundamental Truths, be not moved from them, be not shaken in them by any Temptation whatever.

AND in the next place, bring your Faith to the Trial on these Principles: What do you judge concerning Gods way of saving Sinners by Jesus Christ, as proposed in the Gospel? are you satisfied in it, that it is such as becomes God, and answers all the glorious Attributes of his Nature? Would you have any other way proposed in the room of it? Can you, will you commit the eternal Welfare of your Souls unto the *Grace* and *Faithfulness* of God in this way, so as that you have no Desire to be saved any other way? Doth the Glory of God in any measure shine forth unto you in the Face of Jesus Christ? Do you find a secret Joy in your Hearts, upon the Satisfaction you take in the proposal of this way unto you by the Gospel? Do you in all your Fears and Temptations, in all Approaches of Death, renounce all other Reserves and Reliefs, and betake your whole Confidence unto this way alone, and the Repre-

sentation of God made therein? Herein lies the Faith, and its Exercise, which will be an Anchor unto your Souls in all their Trials.

AND this is the first and principal Ground, or Reason, whereon Faith, divine and saving, doth accept, Embrace and Approve of the way of Gods saving Sinners by Jesus Christ; namely, because it is such as doth become him, and every way answer unto all the holy Properties of his Nature, which are manifested and glorified therein. And where Faith doth approve of it on this Ground and Reason, in truth evidence it self to be truly Evangelical, unto the Supportment and Comfort of them in whom it is.

Secondly, IT doth so approve of this way, as that which it finds *suited unto the whole Design, and all the Desires of an Enlightned Soul.* So when our Lord Jesus Christ compares the Kingdom of God (which is this way of Salvation) unto a *Treasure*, and a precious *Pearl*, he affirms that those who found them had great *Joy*, and the highest Satisfaction, as having attained that which suited their Desires, and gave Rest unto their Minds.

A Soul Enlightned with the Knowledge of the Truth, and made sensible of its own Condition by Spiritual Conviction, hath two predominant Desires and Aims, whereby it is wholly regulated, the one is, that *God may be glorified*, and the other, that *it self may be eternally saved.* Nor can it forgoe either of these Desires, nor are they separable in any Enlightned Soul. It can never cease in either of these Desires, and that to the highest Degree. The whole World cannot dispossess an Enlightned Mind of either of them. Profligate Sinners have no Concernment in the former, no

nor yet those who are under Legal Convictions, if they have therewithal received no Spiritual Light. They would be saved, but for the Glory of God therein, he may look to that himself, they are not concerned in it. For that which they mean by Salvation, is nothing but a freedom from eternal Misery; this they would have, whether God be or no; of what is Salvation truly, they have no Desire.

BUT the first Beam of spiritual Light and Grace, enstates an indefatigable Desire of the Glory of God in the Minds and Souls of them in whom it is: Without this the Soul knows not how to desire its own Salvation: I may say, it would not be saved in a way wherein God should not be glorified: For, without that, whatever its state should be, it would not be that which we call *Salvation*; the Exaltation of the Glory of God belongs essentially thereunto, it consists in the beholding and Enjoyment of that Glory. This Desire therefore is immovably fixed in the Mind and Soul of every enlightned Person; he can admit of no Propofal of Eternal Things that is inconsistent with it.

BUT moreover, in every such Person there is a Ruling Desire of his *own Salvation*: It is natural unto him, as a Creature made for Eternity; it is inseparable from him, as he is a convinced Sinner. And the clearer the Light of any one is in the Nature of this Salvation, the more is this Desire heightned and confirmed in him.

HERE then lieth the Enquiry, namely, How these two prevalent Desires may be reconciled, and satisfied in the same Mind? For, as we are Sinners, there seems to be an inconsistency between

them: The Glory of God in his Juſtice and Holineſs, requires that Sinners ſhould dye and periſh eternally; ſo ſpeaks the Law, this is the Language of Conſcience, and the Voice of all our Fears: Wherefore, for a Sinner to deſire in the firſt place, that God may be glorified, is to deſire that himſelf may be damned.

WHICH of theſe Deſires ſhall the Sinner cleave unto, unto whether of them ſhall it give the Preheminence? ſhall he caſt off all Hopes and Deſires of his own Salvation, and be content to periſh for ever? This he cannot do, God doth not require it of him; he hath given him the contrary in Charge, whilſt he is in this World. Shall he then deſire that God may part with and loſe his Glory, ſo as that one way or other he may be ſaved? Bring himſelf unto an Unconcernment, what becomes of it? This can be no more in an Enlightned Mind, than it can ceaſe to deſire its own Salvation. But how to reconcile theſe things in himſelf a Sinner finds not.

HERE therefore the Glory of this way repreſents it ſelf unto the Faith of every Believer: It not only brings theſe Deſires into a perfect Conſiſtency and Harmony, but maketh them to encreaſe and promote one another. The Deſire of Gods Glory encreaſeth the Deſire of our own Salvation, and the Deſire of our own Salvation enlargeth and inflameth the Deſire of glorifying God therein and thereby. Theſe things are brought into a perfect Conſiſtency and mutual Subſerviency in the Blood of Chriſt, *Rom.* 3. 24, 25, 26. For this way is that which God hath found out, in infinite Wiſdom, to glorify himſelf in the Salvation of Sinners. There is not any thing where-

in the Glory of God doth or may consist, but in this way, is reconciled unto, and consistent with the Salvation of the chiefest of Sinners. There is no Property of his Nature, but is gloriously exalted in and by it: An Answer is given in it, unto all the Objections of the Law, against the Consistency of the Glory of God and the Salvation of Sinners. It pleads his Truth in his Threatnings, in the Sanction of the Law, with the Curse annexed; it pleads his Righteousness, Holiness, and Severity, all engaged to destroy Sinners; it pleads the Instance of God's dealing with the Angels that sinned, and calls in the Witness of Conscience to testifie the Truth of all its Allegations: But there is a full and satisfactory Answer given unto this whole Plea of the Law, in this way of Salvation. God declares in it, and by it, how he hath provided for the satisfaction of all these things, and the Exaltation of his Glory in them, as we shall see immediately.

HERE true Faith will fix it self in all its Distresses: Whatever, saith the Soul, be my State and Condition, whatever be my Fears and Perplexities, whatever Oppositions I meet withall, yet I see in Jesus Christ, in the Glass of the Gospel, that there is no Inconsistency between the Glory of God and my Salvation; that otherwise insuperable Difficulty laid by the Law, in the way of my Life and Comfort, is utterly removed. Whilst Faith keeps this Hold in the Soul, with a constant Approbation of this way of Salvation by Christ, as that which gives a Consistency unto both its governing Desires, that it shall not need forgoe either of them, so as to be contented to be damned, that God may be glorified, as some have spoken;

or to desire Salvation, without a due Regard unto the Glory of God, it will be an Anchor to stay the Soul in all its Storms and Distresses. Some Benefit which will certainly ensue hereon, we may briefly mention.

1. THE Soul will be hereby preserved from ruining Despair, in all the Distresses that may befall it. Despair is nothing but a prevalent Apprehension of mind, that the Glory of God and a mans Salvation are inconsistent; that God cannot be Just, True, Holy, or Righteous, if he in whom that Apprehension is, may be saved. Such a Person doth conclude that his Salvation is impossible, because one way or other it is inconsistent with the Glory of God; for nothing else can render it impossible. Hence ariseth in the Mind an utter Dislike of God, with revengeful Thoughts against him, for being what he is. This cuts off all Endeavours of Reconciliation; yea, begets an Abhorrency of all the means of it, as those which are weak, foolish and insufficient. Such are Christ and his Cross unto Men under such Apprehensions; they judge them unable to reconcile the Glory of God and their Salvation. Then is a Soul in an open Entrance into Hell. From this cursed Frame and Ruin, the Soul is safely preserved by Faiths maintaining in the Mind and Heart a due Perswasion of the Consistency and Harmony that is between the Glory of God and its own Salvation. Whilst this Perswasion is prevalent in it, although it cannot attain any Comfortable Assurance of an especial Interest in it, yet it cannot but Love, Honour, Value, and Cleave unto this way, adoring the Wisdom and Grace of God in it, which is an Act, an Evidence of saving Faith. See *Psal.* 130. 3, 4. Yea,

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2. IT will preserve the Soul from heartless Dispondencies. Many in their Temptations, Darknesses, Fears, Surprizals by Sin, although they fall into ruining Desperation, yet they fall under such desponding Fears and various Discouragements, as keep them off from a vigorous Endeavour after a Recovery: And hereon, for want of the due Exercise of Grace, they grow weaker and darker every day, and are in danger to pine away in their sins. But where Faith keeps the Soul constant unto the Approbation of Gods way of saving Sinners, as that wherein the Glory of God and its own Salvation are not only fully reconciled, but made inseparable, it will stir up all Graces unto a due Exercise, and the diligent Performance of all Duties, whereby it may obtain a Refreshing Sense of a personal Interest in it.

3. IT will keep the Heart full of Kindness towards God, whence Love and gracious Hope will spring. It is impossible but that a Soul overwhelmed with a sense of Sin, and thereon filled with Self-Condemnation, but if it hath a View of the Consistency of the Glory of God with its Deliverance and Salvation, through a free Contrivance of infinite Wisdom and Grace, it must have such Kindness for him, such gracious Thoughts of him, as will beget and kindle in it both Love and Hope, as *Mic.* 7. 18, 20. *Psal.* 85. 8. 1 *Tim.* 1. 15.

4. A Steady Continuance in the Approbation of Gods way of Salvation, on the Reason mentioned, will lead the Mind into that Exercise of Faith, which both declares its Nature, and is the Spring of all the saving Benefits which we receive by it. Now this is such a Spiritual Light into, and Discovery of the Revelation and Declaration made

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the Gospel, of the Wisdom, Love, Grace and Mercy of God in Christ Jesus; and the way of the Communication of the Effect of them unto Sinners by him, as that the Soul finds them suited unto, and able for the pardon of its own sins, its Righteousness and Salvation, so as that it placeth its whole Trust and Confidence for these Ends therein.

THIS being the very Life of Faith, that Act and Exercise of it whereby we are justified and saved, and whereby it evidenceth its truth and sincerity against all Temptations, I shall insist a little on the Explanation of the Description of it now given: And there are three things in it, or required unto it:

1. A Spiritual Light into, and Discovery of the Revelation and Declaration made in the Gospel, of the Wisdom, Love, Grace and Mercy of God in Christ Jesus. It is not a meer Assent unto the Truth of the Revelation, or the Authority of the Revealer; this indeed is supposed and included in it, but it adds thereunto a spiritual Discerning, Perception and Understanding of the things themselves revealed and declared, without which, a bare Assent unto the Truth of the Revelation is of no Advantage: This is called the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. The Encrease wherein, in all Believers, the Apostle doth earnestly pray for, *Eph.* 1. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20. So we discern spiritual Things in a spiritual manner; and hence ariseth the full Assurance of Understanding, to the Acknowledgment of the Mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, *Col.* 2. 2. Or a spiritual Sense of the Power, Glory and Beauty of the Things contained in this Mystery: So, to know Christ, as to know the Power of his Resurrection, and

the Fellowship of his Sufferings, *Phil.* 3. 10.

FAITH affects the mind with an ineffable Sense, Taste, Experience and Acknowledgment of the Greatness, the Glory, the Power, the Beauty of the Things revealed and proposed in this way of Salvation. The Soul in it is enabled to see and understand, that all the things belonging unto it are such as become God, his Wisdom, Goodness and Love, as was before declared: And a spiritual Light enabling hereunto, is of the Essence of saving Faith; unless this be in us, we do not, we cannot give Glory to God, in any Assent unto the Truth. And Faith is that Grace which God hath prepared, fitted and suited, to give unto him the Glory that is his Due; in the Work of our Redemption and Salvation.

2. UPON this spiritual Light into this Revelation of God and his Glory, in this way of saving Sinners, the Mind by Faith finds and sees, that all things in it are suited unto its own Justification and Salvation in particular, and that the Power of God is in them, to make them effectual unto that End. This is that Act and Work of Faith, whereon the whole blessed Event doth depend; it will not avail a man to see all sorts of Viands and Provisions, if they be no way suited unto his Appetite, nor meet for his Nourishment. Nor will it be unto a Man's spiritual Advantage, to take a View of the Excellency of the Gospel, unless he find them suited unto his Condition. And this is the hardest Task and Work that Faith hath to go through with.

FAITH is not an especial Assurance of a Man's own Justification and Salvation by Christ, that it will produce, but not untill another Step or two

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in its Progreſs be over; but Faith is a ſatisfactory Perſwaſion, that the way of God propoſed in the Goſpel, is fitted, ſuited, and able to ſave the Soul in particular, that doth believe, not only that it is a bleſſed way to ſave Sinners in general, but that it is ſuch a way to ſave him in particular: So is this matter ſtated by the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. *This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all Acceptation*, or Approbation, *that Chriſt Jeſus came into the World to ſave ſinners, whereof I am chief.* His Faith doth not abide here, nor confine it ſelf unto this, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the World to ſave ſinners; that this is the holy and bleſſed way of God, for the Salvation of Sinners in general; but he puts in for his own particular Intereſt in that way; it is God's way, fitted and ſuited, and able to ſave me, who am the chiefeſt of Sinners.

AND this, as was ſaid, is the greateſt, and the moſt difficult Work of Faith: For, we ſuppoſe concerning the Perſon who is to believe,

(1.) THAT he is really and effectually convinced of the Sin of Nature, of our Apoſtaſie from God therein, the Loſs of his Image, and the direful Effects that enſue thereon. (2.) That he hath due Apprehenſions of the Holineſs and Severity of God, of the Sanction and Curſe of the Law, with a right underſtanding of the Nature of Sin, and its Demerit. (3.) That he have a full Conviction of his own actual ſins, with all their Aggravations, from their Greatneſs, their Number, and all ſorts of Circumſtances. (4.) That he hath a Senſe of the Guilt of ſecret or unknown ſins, which have been multiplied by that continual propeneſs unto ſin, which he finds working in him. (5.) That he ſeriouſly conſider, what is to be fear

pear before the Judgment-Seat of God, to receive a Sentence for Eternity, with all other things of the like nature, inſeparable from him as a Sinner.

WHEN it is really thus with any man, he ſhall find it the hardeſt thing in the World, and clogged with the moſt Difficulties, for him to believe that the way of Salvation propoſed unto him, is ſuited, fitted, and every way able to ſave him in particular; to apprehend it ſuch, as none of his Objections can riſe up againſt, or ſtand before. But this is that, in the ſecond place, that the Faith of God's Elect will do: It will enable the Soul to diſcern and ſatisfie it ſelf, that there is in this way of God, every thing that is needful unto its own Salvation. And this it will do, on a ſpiritual Underſtanding, and due Conſideration of (1.) The Infiniteneſs of that Wiſdom, Love, Grace and Mercy, which is the Original or Soveraign Cauſe of the whole way, with the ample Declaration and Confirmation made of them in the Goſpel. (2.) Of the unſpeakable glorious way and means for the procuring and communicating unto us of all the Effects of that Wiſdom, Grace and Mercy, namely, the Incarnation and Mediation of the Son of God, in his Oblation and Interceſſion. (3.) Of the great Multitude and Variety of precious Promiſes, engaging the Truth, Faithfulneſs and Power of God, for the Communication of Righteouſneſs and Salvation from thoſe Springs, by that means. I ſay, on the juſt Conſideration of theſe things, with all other Encouragements wherewith they are accompanied, the Soul concludes by Faith that there is Salvation for it ſelf in particular, to be attained in that way.

3. THE laſt Act of Faith in the order of Na-

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ture, is the Souls Acquiescency in and trust unto this way of Salvation for its self, and its own Eternal Condition, with a Renuntiation of all other ways and means for that End. And because Jesus Christ in his Person, Mediation and Righteousness, is the Life and Center of this way, as he in whom alone God will glorifie his Wisdom, Love, Grace and Mercy; as he who hath purchased, procured and wrought all this Salvation for us, whose Righteousness is imputed unto us for our justification, and who in the Discharge of his Office doth actually bestow it upon us, he is the proper and immediate Object of Faith, in this Act of Trust and Affiance. This is that which is called in the Scripture believing in Christ, namely, the trusting unto him alone for Life and Salvation, as the whole of Divine Wisdom and Grace is administred by him unto those Ends. For this we come unto him, we receive him, we believe in him, we trust him, we abide in him, with all those other ways whereby our Faith in him is expressed.

AND this is the second Ground or Reason whereon Faith doth close with, embrace and approve of God's way of saving Sinners; whereby it will evidence it self, unto the Comfort of them in whom it is, in the midst of all their Trials and Temptations.

Thirdly, FAITH approves of this way, as that which makes the Glory of God in the giving, and the Sanction of the Law, to be as eminently conspicuous, as if it had been perfectly fulfilled by every one of us in our own Persons. The Law was a just Representation of the Righteousness and Holiness of God; and the End for which it was given, was, that it might be the means and in-

Inſtrument of the Eternal Exaltation of his Glory in thoſe holy Properties of his Nature. Let no man imagine that God hath laid aſide this Law, as a thing of no more uſe; or, that he will bear a Diminution of that Glory, or any part of it, which he deſigned in the giving of it. Heaven and Earth ſhall paſs away, but no Jot or Tittle of the Law ſhall do ſo. No Believer can deſire, or be pleaſed with his own Salvation, unleſs the Glory of God deſigned by the Law be ſecured. He cannot deſire that God ſhould forgo any part of his Glory that he might be ſaved. Yea, this is that, on the Account whereof he principally rejoyceth in his own Salvation, namely, that it is that wherein God will be abſolutely, univerſally and eternally glorified.

NOW in this way of ſaving Sinners by Jeſus Chriſt, by Mercy, Pardon, and the Righteouſneſs of another, of all which the Law knows nothing, Faith doth ſee and underſtand how all that Glory which God deſigned in the giving of the Law, is eternally ſecured and preſerved entire, without Eclipſe or Diminution. The way whereby this is done is declared in the Goſpel: See *Rom.* 3. 24, 25, 26. *Chap.* 8. 2, 3, 4. *Chap.* 10. 3, 4. Hereby Faith is enabled to anſwer all the Challenges and Charges of the Law, with all its Pleas for the Vindication of divine Juſtice, Truth and Holineſs: It hath that to offer which gives it the utmoſt Satisfaction in all its Pleas for God: So is this Anſwer managed, *Rom.* 8. 32, 33, 34.

AND this is the firſt way, whereby the Faith of Gods Elect doth evidence it ſelf in the minds and Conſciences of them that do believe, in the midſt of all their Conteſts with Sin, their Trials

and Temptations, to their Relief and Comfort, namely, the closing with, and Approbation of Gods way of saving Sinners by Jesus Christ, on the Grounds and Reasons which have been declared.

The Second Evidence of the Faith of God's Elect.

THE second way whereby true Faith doth evidence it self in the Souls and Consciences of Believers, unto their Supportment and Comfort under all their Conflicts with sin, in all their Trials and Temptations, is by a constant Approbation of the Revelation of the Will of God in the Scripture, concerning our Holiness, and the Obedience unto himself which he requireth of us. This Faith will never forgo, whatever Trials it may undergo, whatever Darkness the mind may fall into: This it will abide by in all Extremities. And that it may appear to be a peculiar Effect or work of saving Faith, some things are to be premised and considered:

1. THERE is in all men by Nature a Light, enabling them to judge of the Difference that is between what is morally good, and what is evil, especially in things of more than ordinary importance. This Light is not attained or acquired by us; we are not taught it, we do not learn it: It is born with us, and inseparable from us: It prevents Consideration and Reflection, working naturally, and in a sort necessarily, in the first Actings of our Souls.

AND the discerning Power of this Light as to the

the Moral Nature of Mens Actions, is accompanied inſeparably with a Judgment that they make concerning themſelves, as unto what they do of the one kind or other, and that with reſpect unto the ſuperiour Judgment of God about the ſame things: This the Apoſtle expreſly aſcribes unto the *Gentiles*, who had not the Law, *Rom.* 2. 14, 15. *The Gentiles which have not the Law, do by Nature the things contained in the Law; theſe having not the Law, are a Law unto themſelves, which ſhew the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Conſciences alſo bearing Witneſs, and their Thoughts the mean while accuſing or excuſing one another.* This is a moſt exact Deſcription of a natural Conſcience, in both the Powers of it; it diſcerns that good and evil which is commanded and forbidden in the Law, and it paſſeth an acquitting or condemning Judgment and Sentence, according to what Men have done.

WHEREFORE, this Approbation of Duties in things moral, is common unto all Men. The Light whereby it is guided may be variouſly improved, as it was in ſome of the *Gentiles*: And it may be ſtifled in ſome, until it ſeem to be quite extinguiſhed, until they become like the Beaſts that periſh: And where the diſcerning power of this Light remains, yet through a continual Practice of ſin, and obduracy therein, the judging power of it as unto all its Efficacy may be loſt: So the Apoſtle declares concerning them who are judicially hardened and given up unto ſin, *Rom.* 1. 32. *Theſe knowing the Judgment of God, that they which commit ſuch things are worthy of Death, not only do the ſame, but have pleaſure in them that do them.* They ſtill diſcern what is evil and ſinful,

and know what is the Judgment of God concerning such things; but yet the Love of ſin and Cuſtom in ſinning, do ſo far prevail in them, as to contemn both their own Light and Gods Judgment, ſo as to delight in what is contrary unto them: Theſe the Apoſtle deſcribes, *Eph.* 4. 19. *Being paſt feeling* (all ſenſe of Convictions) *they give themſelves over unto Laſciviouſneſs, to work all Uncleanneſs with greedineſs*; ſuch as the World is filled withall at this Day.

THIS is not that Approbation of Obedience which we enquire after: It is in ſome meaſure in the worſt of Men, nor hath it any likeneſs unto that Duty of Faith which we treat of, as will immediately appear.

2. THERE is a farther Knowledge of Good and Evil by the Law, and this is alſo accompanied with a Judgment acquiting or condemning: For the Law hath the ſame judging Power and Authority over Men that their own Conſciences have; namely, the Authority of God himſelf. The Law is to ſinners as the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, it opens their Eyes, to ſee the Nature of what they have done: *For by the Law is the knowledge of ſin*, Rom. 3. 20. and ſo is the Knowledge of Duty alſo; for it is the adequate Rule of all Duty. There is, I ſay, a Knowledge and Conviction of Duty and Sin, communicated unto Men by the Law, and thoſe far more clear and diſtinct than what is or can be found in Men, from the meer Light of Nature; for it extends to more Inſtances, that being generally loſt where it is alone, as unto many important Duties and Sins: And it declareth the Nature of every ſin and duty far more clearly than Natural Light of it ſelf can do.

AND

AND this Knowledge of good and evil by the Law, may be ſo improved in the Minds of Men, as to preſs them unto a Performance of all known Duties, and an Abſtinence from all known ſins, with a Judgment on them all. But yet herein doth not conſiſt that Approbation of Holineſs and Obedience which Faith will produce. For,

1. AS unto Approbation or Condemnation of Good or Evil: That which is by the Law is particular, or hath Reſpect unto particular Duties and Sins, according as Occaſion doth preſent them; and extends not unto the whole Law abſolutely, and all that is required in it. I do not not ſay, it is always partial: There is a Legal Sincerity, that may have reſpect unto all known Duties and Sins, though it be very rare. Hardly ſhall we find a Perſon meerly under the Power of the Law, who doth not evidence an Indulgence unto ſome Sin, and a Neglect of ſome Duties: But ſuch a thing there may be; it was in *Paul*, in his *Phariſiſme*; He was, *touching the Righteouſneſs which is in the Law, blameleſs*, Phil. 3. 6. He allowed not himſelf in any known ſin, nor in the Neglect of any known Duty, nor could others charge him with any Defect therein; he was blameleſs: But where this is, ſtill this Approbation or Condemnation is particular; that is, they do reſpect particular Duties and Sins, as they do occurr; there is not a reſpect in them unto the whole Righteouſneſs and Holineſs of the Law, as we ſhall ſee; wherefore a man may approve of every Duty in its ſeaſon, as it is offered unto him, or when at any time he thinks of it by an Act of his fixed Judgment, and ſo on the contrary, as unto ſin, and yet come ſhort of that Approbation of Holineſs and Righteouſneſs which we enquire after.

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2. IT is not accompanied with a Love of the things themſelves that are good, as they are ſo, and an Hatred of the contrary: For the Perſons in whom it is, do not, cannot delight in the Law of God in the inward Man, as *Rom.* 7. 22. ſo as to approve of it, and all that is contained in it, cleaving to them with Love and Delight. They may have a Love for this or that Duty, and an Hatred of the contrary, but it is on various Conſiderations, ſuited unto their Convictions and Circumſtances; but it is not on the Account of its formal Nature, as good or evil. Wherefore,

3. NO Man without the Light of ſaving Faith, can conſtantly and univerſally approve of the Revelation of the Will of God, as unto our Holineſs and Obedience.

TO make this evident, which is the Foundation of our preſent Diſcovery of the acting of ſaving Faith, we muſt conſider, (1.) What it is that is to be approved. (2.) What this Approbation is, or wherein it doth conſiſt.

1. THAT which is to be approved is the Holineſs and Obedience which God requireth in us, our Natures and Actions, and accepts from us, or accepts in us. It is not particular Duties, as they occur unto us, taken alone, and by themſelves; but the univerſal Correſpondence of our Natures and Actions unto the Will of God. The Scripture giveth us various Deſcriptions of it, becauſe of the Variety of Graces and gracious Operations which concurr therein. We may here mention ſome of its principal Concerns, having handled the Nature of it at large elſewhere: For it may be conſidered, (1.) As unto its Foundation, Spring and Cauſes, and this is the univerſal Renovation of our Natures

tures unto the Image of God, *Eph.* 4. 24. or the Change of our whole Souls in all their Faculties and Powers into his Likeneſs, whereby we become new Creatures, or the Workmanſhip of God, creeted in Jeſus Chriſt unto good Works, 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. *Eph.* 2. 10. Wherein we are originally and formally ſanctified throughout in our whole Spirit, Soul and Body, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 23. It is the whole Law of God written in our Hearts, transforming them into the Image of the divine Holineſs, repreſented therein: And this, next unto the Blood of Chriſt and his Righteouſneſs, is the principal Spring of Peace, Reſt and Complacency, in and unto the Souls of Believers: It is their Joy and Satisfaction, to find themſelves reſtored unto a Likeneſs and Conformity unto God, as we ſhall ſee farther immediately. And where there is not ſome gracious Senſe and Experience hereof, there is nothing but Diſorder and Confuſion in the Soul: Nothing can give it a ſweet Compoſure, a Satisfaction in it ſelf, a Complacency with what it is, but a ſpiritual ſenſe of this Renovation of the Image of God in it.

2. IT may be conſidered as unto its permanent Principle in the Mind and Affection; and this becauſe of its near Relation unto Chriſt, its Conjunction with him and Derivation from him, is ſometimes ſaid to be Chriſt himſelf; hence we live, yet not ſo much we as Chriſt liveth in us, *Gal.* 2. 20. *For without him we can do nothing*, *Joh.* 15. 5. *For he is our Life*, Col. 3. 4. As it reſides in Believers, it is a permanent principle of ſpiritual Life, Light, Love and Power, acting in the whole Soul, and all the Faculties of the mind, enabling them to cleave unto God, with purpoſe of

of Heart, and to live unto him in all the Acts and Duties of ſpiritual Life: This is that whereby the Holy Ghoſt is in them a *Well of Water, ſpringing up into Everlaſting Life*, Joh. 4. 14. It is the Spirit that is born of the Spirit; it is the divine Nature, whereof we are made partakers by the Promiſes: It is a Principle of victorious Faith and Love, with all Graces any way requiſite unto Duties of Holy Obedience; as to the matter or manner of their Performance, enabling the Soul unto all the Acts of the Life of God, with Delight, Joy and Complacency.

THIS it is in its Nature, however as unto Degrees of its Operation and Manifeſtation it may be very low and weak in ſome true Believers, at leaſt for a Seaſon: But there are none who really are ſo, but there is in them a ſpiritually vital Principle of Obedience, or of living unto God, that is participant of the Nature of that which we have deſcribed; and if it be attended unto, it will evidence it ſelf in its Power and Operations unto the Gracious Refreſhment and Satisfaction of the Soul wherein it is; and there are few who are ſo deſtitute of thoſe Evidences, but that they are able to ſay, whereas I was blind, now I ſee, tho' I know not how my Eyes were opened; whereas I was dead, I find motions of a new Life in me, in breathing after Grace, in hungring and thirſting after Righteouſneſs, though I know not how I was quickned.

3. IT may be conſidered as unto its Diſpoſition, Inclinations and Motions; theſe are the firſt Actings of a vital Principle: As the firſt Actings of Sin are called the Motions of ſin, working in our Members, *Rom.* 7. 5. Such Motions and Inclinati-

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ons unto Obedience do work in the minds of Believers, from this principle of Holineſs: It produceth in them a conſtant, invariable Diſpoſition unto all Duties of the Life of God: It is a new Nature, and a Nature cannot be without ſuitable Inclinations and Motions: And this new ſpiritual Diſpoſition conſiſts in a conſtant Complacency of Mind in that which is good, and according to the Will of God, in an Adherence by Love unto it, in a Readineſs and Fixedneſs of Mind with Reſpect unto particular Duties: In Brief, it is that which *David* deſcribes in the 119th. *Pſalm* throughout, and that which is figuratively foretold concerning the Efficacy of the Grace of the Goſpel, in Changing the Natures and Diſpoſitions of thoſe that are Partakers of it, *Iſa.* 11. 6, 7, 8.

THIS every Believer may ordinarily find in himſelf, for although this Diſpoſition may be variouſly weakned, oppoſed, interrupted by in-dwelling Sin, and the Power of Temptation; though it may be impaired by a neglect of the ſtirring up, and exerciſe of the Principle of ſpiritual Life, in all requiſite Graces, on all Occaſions, yet it will ſtill be working in them, and will fill the mind with a conſtant Diſplacency with it ſelf, when it is not obſerved, followed, improved. No Believer ſhall ever have Peace in his own Mind, who hath not ſome Experience of an univerſal Diſpoſition unto all Holineſs and Godlineſs in his Mind and Soul: Herein conſiſts that Love of the Law, of which it is ſaid, thoſe in whom it is have great Peace, and nothing ſhall offend them, *Pſal.* 119. 165. It is that wherein their Souls find much Complacency.

4. IT may be conſidered with Reſpect unto all

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the Acts, Duties and Works, internal and external, wherein our actual Obedience doth consist: Being on the Principles mentioned, made free from Sin, and becoming the Servants of God, Believers herein have their Fruit unto Holiness, whereof the end is everlasting Life, *Rom.* 6. 22. This I need not stay to describe. Sincerity in every Duty, and Universality with respect unto all Duties, are the Properties of it.

THIS is the Will of God, even your Sanctification, 1 Thessal. 4. 3. That Holiness, without which none shall see God, *Heb.* 12. 14. That good and acceptable and perfect Will of God which we are to approve, *Rom.* 12. 2.

OUR next Enquiry is, what is that Approbation of this way of Holiness which we place as an Evidence of saving Faith? And I say, it is such as ariseth from Experience, and is accompanied with Choice, Delight, and Acquiescency: It is the Acting of the Soul in a delightful Adherence unto the whole Will of God: It is a resolved Judgment of the Beauty and Excellency of that Holiness and Obedience which the Gospel reveals and requires, and that on the Grounds which shall be immediately declared, and the Nature thereof therein more fully opened.

THIS Approbation cannot be in any unregenerate Person, who is not under the Conduct of saving Faith, who is destitute of the Light of it: So the Apostle assures us, *Rom.* 8. 7. *The carnal mind is Enmity against God, for it is not subject unto the Law of God, neither indeed can be.* Whatever Work it may have wrought in it, or upon it, yet whilst it is carnal or unrenewed, it hath a radical Enmity unto the Law of God, which is the frame of

Heart

Heart which stands in direct Opposition unto this Approbation. It may think well of this or that Duty, from its Convictions, and other Considerations, and so attend unto their Performance, but the Law it self, in the universal Holiness which it requires, it doth utterly dislike; those in whom it is, are alienated from the Life of God, through the Ignorance that is in them, *Eph.* 4. 18. This Life of God is that Holiness and Obedience which he requireth of us in their Principles and Duties: And to be alienated from it, is to dislike and disapprove of it; and such is the frame of Mind in all unregenerate Persons.

HAVING thus prepared the way, I return unto the Declaration and Confirmation of the Assertion, namely,

THAT true and saving Faith, in all Storms and Temptations, in all Darknesses and Distresses, will evidence it self, unto the Comfort and Supportment of them in whom it is, by a constant, universal Approbation of the whole Will of God, concerning our Holiness and Obedience, both in general, and in every particular Instance of it.

WE may a little Explain it:

1. FAITH will not suffer the Mind on any Occasion or Temptation to entertain the least Dislike of this way of Holiness, or of any thing that belongs unto it. The Mind may sometimes through Temptations fall under Apprehensions that one shall be eternally ruined, for want of a due Compliance with it; this makes it displeased with it self, but not with the Obedience required, *Rom.* 7. 10, 11, 12. *The Commandment which was ordained to Life, I found to be unto Death; but the Law is holy, and the Commandment is holy, and just, and good.* However it be with me, whatever becomes of me, though I dye and perish,

perish, yet the Law is holy, just, and good. It dislikes nothing in the Will of God, though it cannot attain unto a Compliance with it. Sometimes the Conscience is under Perplexities and Rebukes for Sin; sometimes the Mind is burthened by the Tergiversation of the Flesh unto Duties that are cross unto its Inclinations and Interests, sometimes the World threatens the utmost Dangers unto the Performance of some Duties of Religion, but none of these are able to provoke the Soul that is under the Conduct of Faith to dislike, to think hard of any of those ways and Duties whence these difficulties arise. And,

2. As it will not dislike any thing in this way of Holiness, so it will not desire on any Occasion, that there should be any Alteration in it, or any Abatement of it, or of any thing required in it. *Naaman* the *Syrian* liked well of the Worship of the true God in general, but he would have an Abatement of Duty, as to one Instance, in compliance with his earthly Interest, which discovered his Hypocrisie. Such Imaginations may befall the Minds of Men, that if they might be excused in this or that Instance unto Duties that are dangerous and troublesome, like Profession in the Times of Persecution, or might be indulged in this or that sin, which either their Inclinations are very prone unto, or their secular Interest do call for, they should do well enough with all other things. Accordingly the Practice of many doth answer their Inclination and Desire; they will profess Religion and Obedience unto God, but will keep back part of the Price, will hide a Wedge in their Tents, through Indulgence unto some Corruption, or Dislike of some Duties in their Circumstances. They

They would give unto themſelves the meaſure of their Obedience, and according as Mens Practice is, ſo do they deſire that things indeed ſhould be, that that Practice ſhould pleaſe God which pleaſeth them: This Faith abhorrs; the Soul that is under the Conduct of it, is not capable of any one Deſire that any thing were otherwiſe than it is in the will of God, concerning our Holineſs and Obedience, no more than it can deſire that God ſhould not be what he is. No, though any Imagination ſhould ariſe in it, that by ſome Change and Abatement in ſome inſtances it might be ſaved, which now is uncertain whether that be ſo or no, it will admit of no ſuch Compoſition, but will chooſe to ſtand or fall unto the entire Will of God.

WE ſhall therefore in the next place proceed to enquire, on what Grounds it is that Faith doth thus approve of the whole Will of God, as unto our Holineſs and Obedience; as alſo, how it evidenceth it ſelf ſo to do: And theſe Grounds are two; the one reſpecting God, the other our own Souls.

1. FAITH looks on the Holineſs required of us, as that which is ſuited unto the Holineſs of God himſelf; as that which it is meet for him to require, on the Account of his own Nature, and the infinite Perfections thereof; the Rule is, *Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy*. I require that of you which becometh and anſwereth my own Holineſs; becauſe I am holy, it is neceſſary that you ſhould be ſo; if you are mine in a peculiar manner, your Holineſs is that which becometh my Holineſs to require.

WE have before declared what this Goſpel Holineſs is, wherein it doth conſiſt, and what is required thereunto; and they may be all conſidered

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either as they are in us, inherent in us, and performed by us; or as they are in themselves, in their own Nature, and in the Will of God. In the first way, I acknowledge that by reason of our Weaknesses; Imperfections, and partial Renovation only, as to degrees in this Life, with our manifold Defects and Sins, they make not a clear Representation of the Holiness of God: However they are the best Image of it, even as in the meanest of Believers that this World can afford; but in themselves, and their own Nature, as it lies in the Will of God, they make up the most glorious Representation of himself that God ever did or will grant in this World; especially, if we comprize therein the Exemplification of it, in the humane Nature of Christ himself; for the Holiness that is in Believers is of the same Nature and Kind with that which was and is in Jesus Christ, though his exceed theirs inconceivably in Degrees of Perfection.

WHEREFORE, we are required to be holy, as the Lord our God is holy; and perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect; which we could not be, but that in our Holiness and Perfection there is a Resemblance and Answerableness unto the Holiness and Perfection of God: And if a due Sense hereof were continually upon our Hearts, it would influence us into greater Care and Diligence in all Instances of Duty and Sin, than for the most part we do attain unto and preserve. If we did on all Occasions sincerely and severely call our selves to an Account, whether our Frames, Ways and Actions, bear a due Resemblance unto the Holiness and Perfections of God, it would be a spiritual Preservative on all Occasions.

FAIT

FAITH, I say then, discerneth the Likeness of God in this Holiness, and every Part of it, sees it as that which becomes him to require, and thereon approves of it, reverencing God in it all; and it doth so in all the parts of it, in all that belongs unto it.

1. IT doth so principally in the inward form of it, which we before described; in the new Creature, the new Nature, the Reparation of the Image of God that is in it: In the Beauty hereof, it continually beholds the Likeness and Glory of God; For it is created κατὰ θεὸν, according unto God, after him, or in his Image, in Righteousness and true Holiness, *Eph.* 4. 24. The new Man is renewed after the Image of him that created him, *Col.* 3. 10.

WHEN God first created all things, the Heavens and the Earth, with all that is contained in them, he left such Foot-steps and Impressions of his infinite Wisdom, Goodness and Power, on them, that they might signifie and declare his Perfection, his Eternal Power and Godhead; yet did he not, he is not said to have created them in his own Image: And this was, because they were only a passive Representation of him in the Light of others, and not in themselves; nor did they represent at all that wherein God will be principally glorified among his Creatures, namely, the universal Rectitude of his Nature in Righteousness and Holiness: But of Man, it is said peculiarly and only, that he was made in the Image and Likeness of God; and this was, because in the Rectitude of his Nature he represented the Holiness and Righteousness of God, which is the only use of an Image: This was lost by Sin; Man in his fallen Condition

on doth no more represent God, there is nothing in him that hath any thing of the Likeness or Image of God in it, all is dead, dark, perverse and confused; this new Nature whereof we speak, is created of God for this very end, that it may a blessed Image and Representation of the Holiness and Righteousness of God. Hence it is called the Divine Nature, whereof we are partakers, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. And he that cannot see a Representation of God in it, hath not the Light of Faith and Life in him.

HEREON, I say, Faith doth approve of the Form and Principle of this Holiness, as the Renovation of the Image of God in us; it looks upon it as that which becomes God to bestow and require, and therefore that which hath an incomparable Excellency and Desirableness in it: Yea, when the Soul is ready to faint under an Apprehension, that it is not partaker of this holy Nature, because of the Power of sin in it, and Temptations on it, it knows not whether it self be born of God or no, as is the Case with many; yet where this Faith is, it will discern the Beauty and Glory of the new Creation in some measure, as that which bears the Image of God, and thereon doth it preserve in the Soul a Longing after it, or a further Participation of it.

BY this Work or Act of it doth Faith discover its Sincerity, which is that which we enquire after; whilst it hath an Eye open to behold the Glory of God in the new Creature, whilst it looks on it as that wherein there is a Representation made of the Holiness of God himself, as that which becomes him to require in us, and thereon approves of it as excellent and desirable, it will be an Anchor more

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the Soul in its greateſt ſtorms: For this is a Work beyond what a meer Enlightned Conſcience can ariſe unto: That can approve or diſapprove of all the Acts and Effects of Obedience and Diſobedience, as unto their Conſequents, but to diſcern the ſpiritual Nature of the New Creature, as repreſenting the Holineſs of God himſelf, and thereon conſtantly to approve of it, is the Work alone.

2. IT doth the ſame with reſpect unto the internal Acts and Effects of this New Creature, or Principle of New Obedience: The firſt thing it produceth in us is a Frame of Mind Spiritual and Heavenly; they that are after the Spirit are ſpiritually-minded, *Rom.* 8. 5, 6. It looks on the oppoſite Frame, namely, of being Carnally-minded, as vile and loathſome; it conſiſting in a Readineſs and Diſpoſition of Mind to actuate the Luſts of the Fleſh; but this ſpiritual Frame of Mind is a juſt Conſtellation of all the Graces of the Spirit, influencing, diſpoſing, and making ready the Soul for the Exerciſe of them on all Occaſions, and in all Duties of Obedience; this is the inward Glory of the Kings Daughter, which Faith ſees and approves of, as that which becometh God to require in us; whatever is contrary hereunto, as ſenſual, carnal, worldly frame of Mind, it looks on as vile and baſe, unworthy of God, or of thoſe who deſign the Enjoyment of him.

3. IT doth the ſame with reſpect unto all particular Duties internal and external, when they are enlivened and filled up with Grace: In them conſiſts our walking worthy with God, *Col.* 1. 10. 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 12. Such a Walk as is meet for God to accept that whereby and wherein he is glorified;

The contrary hereunto, in the Neglect of the Duties of Holineſs, or the Performance of them, without the due Exerciſe of Grace, Faith looks on as unworthy of God, unworthy of our high and holy Calling, unworthy of our Profeſſion, and therefore doth conſtantly condemn and abhor.

ALL this, as we obſerved before, Faith will continue to do conſtantly under Temptations and Diſſertions: There are Seaſons wherein the Soul may be very weak, as unto the Powers, Effects and Duties of this ſpiritual Life; ſuch the Pſalmiſt often-times complains of in his own Caſe, and it is evident in the Experience of moſt; few there are who have not found at one time or another great Weakneſs, Decays, and much Deadneſs in their ſpiritual Condition: And ſometimes true Beleivers may be at a Loſs as unto any Refreſhing Experience of it in its Operations. They may not be able to determine in the Conteſt whether Sin or Grace have the Dominion in them: Yet even in all theſe Seaſons Faith will keep up the Soul unto a conſtant high Approbation of this way of Holiand Obedience, in its Root and Fruits, in its Principle and Effects, in its Nature, Diſpoſition, and Duties: For when they cannot ſee the Beauty of theſe things in themſelves, they can ſee it in the Promiſes of the Covenant, in the Truth of the Goſpel, wherein it is declared, and in the Effects of it in others.

AND great Advantage is to be obtained by the due Exerciſe of Faith herein. For,

1. IT will never ſuffer the Heart to be at Reſt in any ſinful way, or under any ſuch ſpiritual Decays as ſhall eſtrange it from the purſuit of this Holineſs. The Sight, the Conviction of its

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Excellency, the Approbation of it, as that which in us and our meaſure anſwers the Holineſs of God, will keep up the Mind unto Endeavours after it, will rebuke the Soul in all its Neglects of it; nor will it allow any Quiet or Peace within, without an Endeavour after a comfortable Aſſurance of it. That Soul is deſparately ſick which hath loſt an abiding ſenſe of the Excellency of this Holineſs, in its Anſwerableneſs unto the Holineſs and Will of God. Fears and Checks of Conſcience are the whole of its Security againſt the worſt of ſins, and they are a Guard not to be truſted unto in the room of the Peace of God. This is one great difference between Believers and thoſe that have not Faith: Fear of the Conſequents of ſin, with an Apprehenſion of ſome Advantages which are to be obtained by a ſober Life and the Profeſſion of Religion, do ſteer and regulate the Minds of Unbelievers, in all they do towards God or for Eternity; but the Minds of Believers are influenced by a View of the Glory of the Image and Likeneſs of God in that Holineſs and all the parts of it which they are called unto: This gives them Love unto it, Delight and Complacency in it, enabling them to look upon it as its own Reward: And without theſe Affections none will ever abide in the ways of Obedience unto the End.

2. WHERE Faith is in this Exerciſe, it will evidence it ſelf unto the Relief of the Soul in all its Darkneſſes and Temptations. The Mind can never conclude that it wholly is without God and his Grace, whilſt it conſtantly approves of the Holineſs required of us. This is not of our ſelves, by Nature we are ignorant of it. This Life is hid with Chriſt

in God, *Col.* 3. 3. where we can ſee nothing of it; hereon we are alienated from it, and do diſlike it; alienated from the Life of God through the Ignorance that is in us, *Epheſ.* 4. 18. And moſt men live all their days in a Contempt of the principal Evidences and Duties of this Life of God, and of the Principle of it, which they look on as a Fable: Wherefore the Mind may have great Satisfaction in a ſight of the Beauty and Approbation of this Holineſs, as that which nothing can produce but ſincere and ſaving Faith.

Secondly, FAITH approves of this way of Holineſs and Obedience, as that which gives that Rectitude and Perfection unto our Nature whereof it is capable in this World. It is the only Rule and Meaſure of them; and whatever is contrary thereunto, is perverſe, crooked, vile and baſe. Some Men think that their Nature is capable of no other Perfection but what conſiſts in the Satisfaction of their Luſts; they know no other Bleſſedneſs, nothing that is ſuitable to their Deſires but the Swinge of Nature, in the Purſuit of its corrupt Luſts and Pleaſures: So are they deſcribed by the Apoſtle, *Eph.* 4. 19. The Buſineſs of their Lives is to make Proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfill it in the Luſts thereof: They walk in the Luſts of the fleſh, *fulfilling* (ſo far as they are able) *the Deſires of the Fleſh and of the Mind*, Epheſ. 2. 3. They neither know nor underſtand what an Hell of Confuſion, Diſorder, and baſe Degeneracy from their Original Conſtitution, their Minds are filled withall; this Perfection is nothing but the next Diſpoſition unto Hell, and it doth manifeſt its own vileneſs unto every one who hath the leaſt Ray of Spiritual Light.

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SOME among the Heathen placed the Rectitude of Nature in Moral Virtues and Operations, according unto them, and this was the utmoſt that natural Light could could ever riſe up unto: But the Uncertainty and Weakneſs hereof are diſcovered by the Light of the Goſpel.

IT is Faith alone that diſcovers what is good for us, in us, and unto us, whilſt we are in this World: It is in the Renovation of the Image of God in us, in the Change and Transformation of our Nature into his Likeneſs; in acting from a gracious Principle of a Divine Life, in Duties and Operations ſuited thereunto, in the participation of the Divine Nature by the Promiſes, that the Good, the Perfection, the Order, the preſent Bleſſedneſs of our Nature do conſiſt.

HEREBY are the Faculties of our Souls exalted, elevated, and enabled to act primigenial Powers, with reſpect unto God, and our Enjoyment of him, which is our utmoſt End and Bleſſedneſs. Hereby are our Affections placed on their proper Objects, (ſuch as they were created meet for, and in cloſing wherewith their Satisfaction, Order, and Reſt doth conſiſt) namely, God and his Goodneſs, or God as revealed in Jeſus Chriſt by the Goſpel; hereby all the Powers of our Souls are brought into a bleſſed Frame and Harmony in all their Operations, whatever is dark, perverſe, unquiet, vile and baſe, being caſt out of them; but theſe things muſt be a little more diſtinctly explained.

1. THERE is in this Goſpel-Holineſs, as the Spring and Principle of it, a ſpiritual ſaving Light, enabling the Mind and Underſtanding to know God in Chriſt, and to diſcern ſpiritual things in a ſpi-

ritual ſaving manner; for herein *God ſhines into our Hearts, to give us the Knowledge of his Glory in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 4. 6. Without this, in ſome Degree, whatever pretence there may be, or Appearance of Holineſs in any, there is nothing in them of what is really ſo, and thereon accepted with God. Blind Devotion, that is, an Inclination of Mind unto Religious Duties deſtitute of this Light, will put Men on a Multiplication of Duties, eſpecially ſuch as are of their own Invention, in a ſhew of Wiſdom in Will-worſhip, Humility, and neglecting of the Body, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks *Col.* 1, 23. wherein there is nothing of Goſpel-Holineſs.

THE new man is renewed in Knowledge, after the Image of him that created him, Col. 3. 10. That this ſaving Light and Knowledge is the Spring and Principle of all real Evangelical Holineſs and Obedience, the Apoſtle declares in that Deſcription which he gives us of the whole of it, both in its Beginning and Progreſs, Col. 1. 9, 10, 11. *We deſire that you may be filled with the Knowledge of his Will, in all Wiſdom and ſpiritual Underſtanding: That you might walk worthy of the Lord, in all pleaſing, being fruitful in every good Work, and encreaſing in the Knowledge of God, ſtrengthned with all might, according to his glorious Power, unto all patience and long-ſuffering with joyfulneſs.* It is a bleſſed Account that is here given us of that Goſpel-Holineſs which we enquire after, in its Nature, Original, Spring, Progreſs, Fruits and Effects: And a ſerious Conſideration of it as here propoſed, a View of it in the Light of Faith, will evidence how diſtant and different it is from thoſe Schemes of Moral Virtues which ſome would ſubſtitute in its room; it hath a Glory in it which no unenlightned Mind can

can behold or comprehend; the foundation of it is laid in the Knowledge of the Will of God, in all Wiſdom and Spiritual-Underſtanding; this is that ſpiritual ſaving Light whereof we ſpeak, the Encreaſe hereof is prayed for in Believers by the Apoſtle, Epheſ. 1. 17, 18. *Even that the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of Glory, would give unto you the Spirit of Wiſdom, and Revelation in the Knowledge of him; the Eyes of your Underſtanding being enlightned, that you may know what is the Hope of his Calling, and what is the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints*; which here is called encreaſing in the Knowledge of God, *ver.* 10. The ſingular Glory of this ſaving Light in its Original, its Cauſes, Uſe and Effects, is moſt illuſtriouſly here declared, and this Light is in every true Believer, and is the only immediate Spring of all Goſpel-Holineſs and Obedience: For, *The new man is renewed in Knowledge, after the Image of him that created him*, Col. 3. 10.

THIS Light, this Wiſdom, this ſpiritual Underſtanding thus communicated unto Believers, is the Rectitude and Perfection of their Minds in this World: It is that which gives them Order, and Peace, and Power, enabling them to act all their Faculties in a due manner, with reſpect unto their Being and End: It is that which gives Beauty and Glory to the inward man, and which conſtitutes a Believer an Inhabitant of the Kingdom of Light; whereby we are delivered from the Power of Darkneſs, and tranſlated into the Kingdom of the Son of God's Love, Col. 1. 13. Or, *out of Darkneſs into his marvellous light*, 1 Pet. 2. 9.

THAT which is contrary hereunto, is that Ignorance, Darkneſs, Blindneſs, and Vanity, which

the Scripture declares to be in the Minds of all unregenerate Perſons; and they are really ſo, where they are not cured by the glorious working of the Power and Grace of God before-mentioned.

NOW Faith diſcerneth theſe things as the ſpiritual man diſcerneth all things, 1 *Cor.* 2. 15. It ſees the Beauty of this heavenly Light, and judgeth that it is that which giveth Order and Rectitude unto the Mind; as alſo that which is contrary unto it is vile, baſe, horrid, and to be aſhamed of. As for thoſe who love Darkneſs more than Light, becauſe their Deeds are evil, it knows them to be ſtrangers unto Chriſt and his Goſpel.

2. Again, there is required unto this Holineſs a Principle of Spiritual Life and Love unto God: This guides, acts, and rules in the Soul, in all its Obedience, and it gives the Soul its proper order in all its Operations: That which is contrary hereunto is Death, and Enmity againſt God. Faith judgeth between theſe two Principles and their Operations; the former in all its Actings it approves of as lovely, beautiful, deſirable, as that which is the Rectitude and Perfection of the Will; and the other it looks on as deformed, froward, and perverſe.

3. THE like may be ſaid of its Nature and Operations in the Affections, as alſo of all thoſe Duties of Obedience which proceed from it, as it is deſcribed in the place before-mentioned.

IT remaineth only, that we ſhew by what Acts, Ways, and Means, Faith doth evidence this its Approbation of Goſpel-Holineſs, as that which is lovely and deſirable in it ſelf, and which gives all that Rectitude and Perfection unto our Minds, which they are capable of in this World. And it doth ſo,

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1. BY that Self-diſplacency and Abaſement which it works in the Mind on all Inſtances and Occaſions, where it comes ſhort of this Holineſs: This is the chief Principle and Cauſe of that holy Shame which befalls Believers on every Sin and Miſcarriage, wherein they come ſhort of what is required in it, *Rom.* 6. 21. *The things whereof ye are now aſhamed:* Now when by the Light of Faith you ſee how vile it is, and unworthy of you, what a Debaſement of your Souls there is in it, you are aſhamed of it. It is true, the principal Cauſe of this holy Shame, is a ſenſe of the Unſuitableneſs that is in ſin unto the Holineſs of God, and the horrible Ingratitude and Diſingenuity that there is in ſinning againſt him: But it is greatly promoted by this Conſideration, that it is a thing unworthy of us, and that wherein our Natures are exceedingly debaſed. So it it ſaid of provoking Sinners, that they debaſe themſelves even unto Hell, *Iſa.* 57. 9. or make themſelves as vile as Hell it ſelf, by ways unworthy the Nature of men. And this is one Ground of all thoſe ſevere Self-reflections which accompany godly Sorrow for ſin, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11.

AND hereby doth Faith evidence it ſelf and its own Sincerity, whilſt a man is aſhamed of, and abaſed in himſelf for every ſin, for every thing of ſin, wherein it comes ſhort of the Holineſs required of us, as that which is baſe and unworthy of our Nature, in its preſent Conſtitution and Renovation; though it be that which no Eye ſees but God's and his own, he hath that in him which will grow on no Root but ſincere Believing. Wherefore, whatever may be the diſquieting Conflicts of ſin in and againſt our Souls, whatever Decays we may fall into,

into, which be the two Principles of Darkneſs and Fears in Believers, whilſt this inward holy Shame, and Self-abaſement, on the Account of the Vileneſs of ſin, is preſerved; Faith leaves not it ſelf without an Evidence in us.

2. IT doth the ſame by a ſpiritual Satisfaction which it gives the Soul in every Experience of the transforming Power of this Holineſs, rendring it more and more like unto God. There is a ſecret Joy and ſpiritual Refreſhment riſing in the Soul from a ſenſe of its Renovation unto the Image of God, and all the Actings and Encreaſes of the Life of God in it augment this Joy; herein conſiſts its gradual Return unto its primitive Order and Rectitude, with a bleſſed Addition of ſupernatual Light and Grace by Chriſt Jeſus: It finds it ſelf herein coming home to God from its old Apoſtacy, in the way of approaching to Eternal Reſt and Bleſſedneſs: And there is no Satisfaction like unto that which it receives therein.

THIS is the ſecond way wherein Faith will abide firm and conſtant, and doth evidence it ſelf in the Soul of every Believer; however low and mean its Attainments be, in this ſpiritual Life, and the Fruits of it, though it be overwhelmed with Darkneſs and a ſenſe of the Guilt of ſin, though it be ſurprized and perplexed with the Deceit and Violence thereof, yet Faith will continue here firm and unſhaken. It ſees that Glory and Excellency in the Holineſs and Obedience that God requireth of us, as it is a Repreſentation of his own glorious Excellencies, the Renovation of his Image, and the Perfection of our Natures thereby, as it conſtantly approves of it, even in the deepeſt Trials which the Soul can be exerciſed withall; and

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whilſt this Anchor holds firm and ſtable, we are ſafe.

The Third Evidence of the Faith of God's Elect.

Thirdly, FAITH will evidence it ſelf by a diligent, conſtant Endeavour, to keep it ſelf and all Grace in due Exerciſe, in all Ordinances of Divine Worſhip, private and publick.

THIS is the Touch-ſtone of Faith and ſpiritual Obedience, the moſt intimate and difficult part of this Exerciſe: Where this is not, there is no Life in the Soul. There are two things whereby Men do or may deceive themſelves herein; (1.) Abounding in the outward Performance of Duties, or a Multiplication of them; hereby Hypocrites have in all Ages deceived themſelves, *Iſa.* 58. 2, 3. And it was the Covering that the Church of *Rome* provided for their Apoſtacy from the Goſpel: An Endleſs Multiplication of Religious Duties was that which they truſted to, and boaſted in; and we may find thoſe daily that pretend a Conſcience, as unto the conſtant Obſervation of outward Duties, and yet will abſtain from no ſin that comes in the way of their Luſts. And Men may and do oft-times abide conſtant in them, eſpecially in their Families, and in publick; yea, multiply them beyond the ordinary Meaſure, hoping to countenance themſelves in other Luſts, and Neglects thereby. (2.) Aſſiſtance of Gifts in the Performance of them; but as this may be, where

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where there is not one Dram of Grace, ſaving Grace, ſo when reſted in it, is a moſt powerful Engine to keep the Soul in Formality, to ruin all Beginning of Grace, and to bring an incurable hardneſs in the whole Soul.

WHEREVER Faith is in ſinceriry it will conſtantly labour, endeavour, and ſtrive to fill up all Duties of Divine Worſhip with the living, real, heart-acting of Grace; and where it doth not ſo, where this is not attained, it will never ſuffer the Soul to take any Reſt or Satisfaction in ſuch Duties, but will caſt them away as a defiled Garment: He that can paſs through ſuch Duties without a ſenſible Endeavour for the real Exerciſe of Grace in them, and without Self-abaſement on the performance of them, will hardly find any other clear Evidence of ſaving Faith in himſelf.

THERE are three Evils that have followed the Ignorance, or Neglect, or Wearineſs of this Exerciſe of Faith, which have proved the Ruin of multitudes.

1. THIS hath been the Occaſion and Original of all falſe Worſhip in the World, with the Invention of thoſe Superſtitious Rites and Ceremonies wherein it conſiſts: For Men having loſt the Exerciſe of Faith in the Ordinances of Worſhip that are of Divine Inſtitution, they found the whole of it to be uſeleſs and burthenſome unto them: For without this conſtant Exerciſe of Faith there is no Life in it, nor Satisfaction to be obtained by it; they muſt therefore have ſomething in it, or accompanying of it, which may entertain their Minds, and engage their Affections unto it: If this had not been done, it would have been utterly deſerted by the moſt. Hereon were invented Forms of Prayer in great Diverſity, with continual Diverſions and

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Avocations of the Mind from what is propoſed: Becauſe it cannot abide in the purſuit of any thing ſpiritual, without the Exerciſe of Faith: This gives it ſome Entertainment by the meer Performance, and makes it think there is ſomething where indeed is nothing; hereunto are added outward Ceremonies of Veſtments, Poſtures, and Geſtures of Veneration unto the ſame end; there is no other Deſign in them all, but to entertain the Mind and Affections with ſome Complacency and Satisfaction in outward Worſhip, upon the loſs or want of that Exerciſe of Faith which is the Life and Soul of it in Believers: And as any Perſons do decay herein, they ſhall find themſelves inſenſibly ſinking down into the uſe of theſe lifeleſs Forms, or that Exerciſe of their natural Faculties and Memory, which is not one Jot better: Yea, by this means ſome from an Eminency in Spiritual Gifts, and the performance of Duties by vertue of them, have ſunk into an *Ave-Mary*, or a *Credo*, as the beſt of their Devotion.

2. THIS hath cauſed many to turn aſide, to fall off from, and forſake the ſolemn Ordinances of Divine Worſhip, and to betake themſelves unto vain Imaginations for Relief, in Trembling, Enthuſiaſtical Singing and feigned Raptures; from hence have ſo many forſaked their own Mercies to follow after lying Vanities, they kept for a while unto the Obſervance of the divine Inſtitutions of Worſhip, but not having Faith to exerciſe in them, by which alone they are Life and Power, they became uſeleſs and burthenſome unto them; they could find neither Sweetneſs, Satisfaction, nor Benefit in them. It is not poſſible that ſo many in our days, if ever they had taſted of the old Wine, ſhould ſo go after new;

new; if ever they had Experience of that Savour, Power, and Life, which is in the Ordinances of Divine Worſhip, when acted and enlivened by the Exerciſe of Faith, ſhould forſake them for that which is nothing: *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for had they been of us, they would have continued with us: Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.* This therefore is the true Reaſon why ſo many in our days, after they have for a ſeaſon abode under and in the Obſervation of the Goſpel-Ordinances of Worſhip, have fallen off from them, namely, not having Faith to exerciſe in them, nor endeavouring after it, they did really find no Life in them, nor Benefit by them.

SOME on the ſame Ground fall into Prophaneneſs, pretending to take up with a natural Religion, without any inſtituted Worſhip at all. Of this ſort of Perſons we have multitudes in the days wherein we live, having nothing of the Light of Faith, they can ſee no Form or Comelineſs in Chriſt, nor any thing that belongs unto him; by theſe means are Souls every day precipitated into ruine.

HEREIN therefore, I ſay, true Faith will evidence it ſelf, in all Darkneſſes and Diſtreſs whatſoever: It will always endeavour to keep it ſelf and all other Graces in a due and conſtant Exerciſe in all Duties of Worſhip, private and publick; it may ſometimes be weakened in its Actings and Operations, it may be under Decays, it may be as a Sleep, and that not only as unto particular Duties and Seaſons, but as unto the inward habitual frame of the Mind; but where it is true and genuine, it will ſhake it ſelf out of this duſt, caſt off the ſin that doth ſo eaſily beſet us, and ſtir up it ſelf

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with all Might and Contention unto its Duty: And there is no more dangerous State for a Soul, than when it is ſinking down into Formality, and neglect of the Exerciſe of Faith, in a multitude of Duties; then is it aſſuredly ready to dye, if it be not dead already.

IF we are Wiſe therefore, we will watch, and take care that we loſe not this Evidence of Faith; it will ſtand us in ſtead, when it may be all other things ſeem to be againſt us; ſome have been relieved by the Remembrance of this Exerciſe of Faith, when they have been at the door of Deſperation; ſuch or ſuch a Seaſon they had Experience of the work of Faith in Prayer, hath been their Relief, an Experience hereof is a Jewel, which it may be of no great uſe whilſt it lies by you locked up in a Cabinet, but which you will know the worth of, if ever you come to need Bread for your Lives.

IT is therefore worth while to enquire what we ought to do, or what means we ought to uſe that we may keep up Faith unto its due Exerciſe in all the parts of Divine Worſhip, ſo as that it may give us a comforting Evidence of it ſelf in times of Temptation and Darkneſs? And unto this End the enſuing Directions may be of uſe.

1. LABOUR to have your Hearts always affected with a due Senſe of the infinite Perfections of the Divine Nature in all our Approaches unto him, eſpecially of his Sovereign Power, Holineſs, Immenſity, and Omnipreſence; and this will produce in us alſo a Senſe of infinite Diſtance from him. As this is neceſſary, from the Nature of the things themſelves, ſo the Scripture gives us ſuch Deſcriptions of God as are ſuited to ingenerate this frame in us; this is that which *Joſhua* aimed to bring the People

People unto, when he designed to engage them in the Service of God in a due manner, *Josh.* 24. 19, 20, 21, 22. That which the Apostle requireth in us, *Heb.* 12. 28, 29. And unto the same End glorious Descriptions and Appearances of God are multiplied in Scripture: If we fail herein, if we do not on all Occasions fill our Minds with reverential Thoughts of God, his Greatness, and his Holiness, Faith hath no foundation to stand upon in its Exercise in the Duties of Worship: This is the only inlet into the due Exercise of Grace; where it is wanting, all holy Thoughts and Affections are shut out of our minds; and where it is present, it is impossible but that there will be some gracious working of Heart in all our Duties; if we are empty hereof in our Entrance of Duties, we shall be sure to be filled with other things, which will be cloggs and hindrances unto us: But Reverential Thoughts of God in our Approaches unto him, will cast out all superfluity of Naughtiness, and dissipate all carnal, formal frames, which will vitiate all our Duties. Keep your Hearts therefore under this Charge in all your Accesses unto God, and it will constantly open a door unto that Exercise of Faith which we enquire after.

HEREON, and herewith we shall be affected with a sense of our infinite Distance from him, which is another means to stir up Faith unto its due Exercise in Reverence and Godly Fear: So *Abraham* was affected, *Gen.* 18. 27. which the wise man directs us unto, *Eccles.* 5. 2.

CARNAL Boldness in the want of these things ruins the Souls of Men, rendring all their Duties of Worship unacceptable unto God, and unprofitable unto themselves.

AFFECT your Hearts with a due sense of Unsuitableness

ſuitableneſs of our beſt Duties unto his Holineſs and Majeſty, and of his infinite Condeſcenſion in the Acceptance of them. Suppoſe there is in any of our Duties the beſt and the moſt lively Exerciſe of Grace that we can attain unto, the moſt Fervency in Prayer, with the moſt diligent Attendance of our minds, the moſt Humility and contrite Trembling in hearing the Word, the moſt devout Affection of our Minds in other parts of Worſhip; alas! what is all this to God, how little doth it anſwer his infinite Holineſs! See *Job* 4. 18, 19. Chap. 15. 15, 16. Our Goodneſs extends not unto him, *Pſal.* 16. There are no meaſures, there is no proportion between the Holineſs of God and our beſt Duties. There is Iniquity in our holy things, they have need of Mercy and Pardon, of Cleanſing and Juſtification by the Blood of Chriſt no leſs than our Perſons: And an infinite Condeſcenſion it is in God to take any notice of us or them. Yea, it is that which we muſt live in all holy Admiration of, all our days.

NOW if it be thus with our beſt Duties, in our beſt Frames, what an Outrage of Sloth and Negligence is it, if we bring the Carcaſs of Duties unto God, for want of ſtirring up Faith unto its due Exerciſe in them! how great is this folly, how unſpeakable is the Guilt of this Negligence! Let us therefore keep a ſenſe hereof upon our Hearts, that we may always ſtir up our ſelves unto our beſt in Duties of Religious Worſhip. For,

3. A Negligence herein, or the want of ſtirring up Faith unto a due Exerciſe in all Duties of worſhip, is the higheſt affront we can put upon God, arguing a great Regardleſneſs of him, whilſt it is ſo with us, we have not, we cannot have a due

Senſe of any of the divine Perfections, of the divine Nature, we turn God what lies in us into an Idol, ſuppoſing that he may be put off with the out-ſide and appearance of things. This the Apoſtle cautioneth us againſt, *Heb.* 4. 12, 13. and which God deteſts, *Iſa.* 29. 13. And he pronounceth him a Deceiver, and Curſed, who offereth unto him the lame and blind while he hath a Male in the flock, *Mal.* 1. 14. Yet thus is it with us in ſome degree, whenever we are negligent in ſtirring up Faith into its proper Exerciſe in holy Duties: That alone renders them the Male of the flock, without it they are lame and blind, a corrupt thing.

IT is a ſad thing for Men to loſe their Duties, to be at charge and trouble in the Multiplication of them, and Attendance unto them to no purpoſe: Oh how much more ſad is it, when they are all Provocations of the Eyes of God's Glory? when they tend to encreaſe the Formality and Hardneſs of their Hearts, towards the ruine of their Souls?

STAND in awe therefore, and ſin not, commune with your own Hearts; ceaſe not, until on all Occaſions you bring them into that Exerciſe of Faith wherein you may glorifie God, as God, and not deal with him as an Idol.

4. UNTO the ſame End, keep your Souls always deeply affected with a ſenſe of the things about which you are to treat with God in all the Duties of his Worſhip. They are referred unto two Heads (1.) Thoſe which concern his Glory. (2.) Thoſe which concern our own Souls: Without a conſtant due Senſe of thoſe things on our Hearts, Faith will not act it ſelf aright in any of our Duties: Without this intimate Concern and deep Senſe, we know not whether we need Faith in our Prayers, or have

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an Exercise of it; Formality will drown all. The best of our Prayers is but an Expression unto God of what Sense we have of those things; if we have none, we Pray not at all, whatever we say or do; but when these things dwell in our Minds, when we think on them continually, when our Hearts cleave unto them, Faith will be at Work in all our Approaches to God. Can you not Pray? charge your Hearts with these things, and you will learn so to do.

5. WATCH diligently against those things which ye find by Experience are apt to obstruct your fervency in Duties: Such are Indispositions through the flesh, or weariness of the flesh, distracting foolish Imaginations, the Occasions of Life revolving in our Minds, and the like. If such Impediments as these be not removed, if they be not watched against, they will influence the mind, and suffocate the Exercise of Faith therein.

6. ABOVE all, the principal Rule herein is, that we would always carefully remember the Concernment of Christ in these Duties, with Respect unto his Office: He is the high Priest over the House of God; through him, and under his Conduct are we always to draw nigh to God, and his Work it is to present the Prayers and Supplications of the Church to God. Now we have no way to come unto Christ for his Assistance in the discharge of his Office on our Behalf but by Faith; and in all our Duties of holy Worship we make a Profession of our doing so, of our coming unto God by him as our high Priest; if we endeavour not therein to have Faith in Exercise, how do we mock, or make a shew to him of doing that which indeed we endeavour not to do. There can be no greater Contempt of Christ in his Office, nor greater Undervaluation of his Love: But

a due Conſideration hereof, namely, of the Concernment of Chriſt in all our Duties, with reſpect unto the Office which he diſchargeth for us in Heaven, is that which directly leads Faith into its proper Exerciſe: For through him, and that in diſcharge of his Office, we believe in God. And when the Mind is exerciſed with due Thoughts of him, if there be any thing of true ſaving Faith in the Heart, it will act it ſelf unto a bleſſed Experience.

THESE things may be of uſe to ſtir us up, and guide us unto that Exerciſe of Faith in all holy Duties, an Experience whereof abiding in the Soul, will evidence the Truth of it, unto our Supportment and Comfort in all Temptations and Diſtreſſes.

SOME it may be will ſay, that their Gift in Prayer is mean and weak, that they cannot expreſs themſelves with Earneſtneſs and Fervency, and ſo know not whether there be any Faith in Exerciſe in their Prayers or no. I anſwer, there is nothing at all herein, for Grace may be very high where where Gifts are very low, and that frequently.

AND it may be others will complain of the meaneſs of their Gifts on whom they attend in Prayer, which is ſuch as they cannot accompany them in the Exerciſe of any Grace. I anſwer, (1.) There is no doubt but that there is a great Difference in the ſpiritual Gifts of Men in this matter, ſome being much more effectual unto Edification than others. (2.) Take care that you are called in Providence and Duty to join with them whom you intend, that you do not firſt voluntarily chooſe that which is unto your Diſadvantage, and then complain of it. (3.) Be their Gifts never ſo mean, if Grace in their own Hearts be exerciſed by it, ſo it may

be

be in ours; where there is no Evidence thereof, I confeſs the Caſe is hard. (4.) Let the mind be ſtill fixed on the matter or things uttered in Prayer, ſo as to cloſe with and act Faith about what is a real Object of it, and it will find its proper work in that duty.

The Fourth Evidence of the Faith of God's Elect.

I Come in the next place to inſtance in a peculiar way whereby true Faith will evidence it ſelf, not always, but on ſome Occaſions; and this is by bringing the Soul into a ſtate of Repentance. And three things muſt be ſpoken unto. (1.) In general, what I intend by this ſtate of Repentance. (2.) What are the Times and Occaſions, or who are the Perſons wherein Faith will act it ſelf unto this End. (3.) What are the Duties required unto ſuch a ſtate.

1. BY this ſtate of Repentance I do not underſtand meerly the Grace and Duty of Evangelical Repentance: For this is abſolutely inſeparable from true Faith, and no leſs neceſſary unto Salvation than it ſelf. He that doth not truly and really repent of ſin, whatever he profeſs himſelf to believe, he is no true Believer. But I intend now ſomewhat that is peculiar, that is, not common unto all, whereby on ſome Occaſions Faith doth evidence its Power and Sincerity.

NEITHER yet do I mean a Grace, Duty or State, that

that is of another kind or nature from that of Go ſpel-Repentance, which is common to all Believers. There are not two kinds of true Repentance, nor two different ſtates of them that are truly penitent: All that I intend, is an eminent Degree of Goſpel-Repentance, in the Habit or Root, and in all the Fruits and Effects of it. There are various Degrees in the Power and Exerciſe of Goſpel-Graces, and ſome may be more eminent in one, and ſome in another; as *Abraham* and *Peter* in Faith, *David* and *John* in Love. And there may be Cauſes and Occaſions for the greater and higher Exerciſe of ſome Graces and Duties at one time than at another; for we are to attend unto Duties according unto our Circumſtances, ſo as we may glorifie God in them, and Advantage our own Souls: So the Apoſtle *James* directs us, *Chap.* 5. 13. *Is any afflicted? let him pray: Is any merry? let him ſing Pſalms.* Several States, and various Circumſtances in them, call for the peculiar Exerciſe of ſeveral Graces, and the diligent Performance of ſeveral Duties. And this is that which is here intended, namely, a peculiar, conſtant, prevalent Exerciſe of the Grace and Duties of Repentance in a ſingular manner: What is required hereunto, ſhall be afterwards declared.

2. As unto the Perſons in whom this is required, and in whom Faith will evidence it ſelf by it, they are of various ſorts.

1. SUCH as have been by the power of their Corruptions and Temptations ſurprized into great ſins: That ſome true Believers may be ſo, we have Preſidents both in the Old Teſtament and in the New: Such I mean as Uncleanneſs, Drunkenneſs, Gluttony, Theft, Premeditated Lying, Oppreſſion in Dealing, and failing in Profeſſion in the time of Per-

Perſecution: This latter in the Primitive Church was never thought recoverable, but by Faith acting it ſelf in a ſtate of Repentance. Such Sins will have great Sorrows, as we ſee in *Peter*, and the inceſtuous *Corinthian*, who was in danger to be ſwallowed up of overmuch Sorrow, 2 *Cor.* 2. 1. Where it hath been thus with any, true Faith will immediately work for a Recovery by a through Humiliation and Repentance, as it did in *Peter*: And in caſe that any of them ſhall lye longer under the power of ſin, through want of effectual Convictions, it will coſt them dear in the Iſſue, as it did *David*; but in this Caſe, for the moſt part Faith will not reſt in the meer joynting again the Bone that was broken, or with ſuch a Recovery as gives them Peace with God and their own Conſciences, but by a juſt and due Remembrance of the Nature of their Sin, its Circumſtances and Aggravations, the ſhameful Unkindneſs towards God that was in it, the Grief of the Holy Spirit, and Diſhonour of Chriſt by it, it will decline and diſpoſe the Soul to a humble contrite Frame, to a mournful Walking, and the univerſal Exerciſe of Repentance all its Days.

AND indeed where it doth not ſo, Mens Recovery from great Sins are juſtly to be queſtioned, as unto their Sincerity. For want hereof it is that we have ſo many palliated Cures of great ſins, followed with fearful and dangerous Relapſes; if a man ſubject to great Corruptions and Temptations hath by them been ſurpriſed into great actual ſin, and been ſeemingly recovered through Humiliation and Repentance, if he again break the yoke of this ſtated Repentance whereof we ſpeak, he will quickly again be over-

come, and perhaps irrecoverably. Herein he alone that walketh ſoftly, walketh ſafely.

2. IT is neceſſary for ſuch as have given Scandal and Offence by their Miſcarriages; this will ſtick very cloſe unto any who hath the leaſt ſpark of ſaving Faith. It is that which God is in a peculiar manner provoked with in the ſins of his People, as in the Caſe of *David*, 2 *Sam.* 12. 14. So alſo *Ezek.* 36. 20. *Rom.* 2. 24. This keeps alive the Remembrance of ſin, and ſets it before Men continually, and is a ſpring in a gracious Soul of all Acts and Duties of Repentance; it was ſo in *David* all his days, and probably in *Mary Magdalen* alſo. Where it hath been thus with any, Faith will keep the Soul in an humble and contrite frame, watchful againſt Pride, Elation of Mind, Careleſneſs and Sloath; it will recover godly Sorrow and Shame, with Revenge, or Self-reflection, in great Abaſement of Mind, all which things belong to the ſtate of Repentance intended. They that can eaſily ſhake of a Senſe of Scandal given by them, have very little of Chriſtian Ingenuity in their Minds.

3. IT is ſo unto ſuch as have perplexing Luſts and Corruptions which they cannot ſo ſubdue but that they will be perplexing and defiling of them: For where there are ſuch, they will in Conjunction with Temptations frequently diſquiet, wound and defile the Soul: This brings upon it wearineſs and Outcries for Deliverance, *Rom.* 7. 24. In this State Faith will put the Soul on Prayer, Watchfulneſs, Diligence, in Oppoſition unto the Deceit and Violence of ſin. But this is not all, it will not reſt here, but it will give the Mind ſuch a Senſe of its diſtreſſed, dangerous Condition, as

ſhall

shall fill it constantly with godly Sorrow, Self-abasement, and all Duties of Repentance. No man can hold out in such a Conflict, nor maintain his Peace on right Grounds, who doth not live in the constant Exercise of Repentance, indeed who doth not endeavour in some measure to come up unto that State of it which we shall afterwards describe: For Men who have untameable Corruptions working continually in their Minds, by Imaginations, Thoughts, and Affections, to think to carry it in a general way of Duties and Profession, they will be mistaken, if they look either for Victory or Peace: This sort of men are of all others most peculiarly called unto this State and Duty.

4. SUCH as would be found Mourners for the sins of the Age, Place, and Time wherein they live, with the Consequents of them, in the Dishonour of God, and the Judgments which will ensue thereon. There are times wherein this is an especial and eminent Duty, which God doth highly approve of: Such are they wherein the visible Church is greatly corrupted, and open Abominations are found amongst Men of all sorts, even as it is at this day; then doth the Lord declare how much he values the Performance of this Duty, as he testifies *Ezek.* 9. 4. They alone shall be under his especial Care in a day of publick Distress and Calamity: A Duty wherein it is to be feared that we are most of us very defective. Now the frame of Heart required hereunto cannot be attained, nor the Duty rightly performed, without that state of Repentance and Humiliation which we enquire into; without it we may have transient Thoughts of these things, but such as will very

little affect our Minds: But where the Soul is kept in a conſtant ſpititual Frame, it will be ready for this Duty on all Occaſions.

5. IT becomes them, who having paſſed through the greateſt part of their Lives, do find all outward things to iſſue in Vanity and Vexation of Spirit, as it was with *Solomon* when he wrote his *Eccleſiaſtes*. When a Man recounts the various Scenes and Appearances of things which he hath paſſed through in his Life, and the various Conditions he hath been in, he may poſſibly find that there is nothing ſteady but Sorrow and Trouble. It may be ſo with ſome, I ſay, with ſome good Men, with ſome of the beſt Men, as it was with *Jacob*: Others may have received more ſatisfaction in their Courſe; but if they alſo will look back, they ſhall find how little there hath been in the beſt of their tranſcient Comforts, they will ſee enough to make them ſay, there is nothing in theſe things, it is high Time to take off all Expectations from them: Such perſons ſeem to be called unto this eſpecial Exerciſe of Repentance and Mourning for the Remainder of their Lives.

6. SUCH as whoſe Hearts are really wounded and deeply affected with the Love of Chriſt, ſo as that they can hardly bear any longer abſence from him, nor delight in the things wherein they are detained and kept out of his preſence: This frame the Apoſtle deſcribes, 2 *Cor.* 5. 2, 4, 6, 8. They live in a groaning Condition, throughly ſenſible of all the Evils that accompany them in this abſence of the Bridegroom; and they cannot but continually reflect upon the Sins and Follies which their Lives have been and are filled with all, in this their Diſtance from Chriſt: Whereas there-

therefore their Hearts are filled with inflamed Affections towards him, they cannot but walk humbly and mournfully until they come unto him. It may be ſaid, that thoſe who have Experience of ſuch Affection unto the Lord Jeſus, cannot but have continual matter of Joy in themſelves, and ſo of all Men have leaſt need of ſuch a ſtate of conſtant Humiliation and Repentance. I ſay, it is ſo indeed, they have ſuch matter of Joy, and therewith Chriſt will be formed in them more and more every day. But I ſay alſo, there is no Inconſiſtency between ſpiritual Joy in Chriſt, and godly Sorrow for Sin. Yea, no man in this Life ſhall ever be able to maintain ſolid Joy in his Heart, without the continual working of godly Sorrow alſo: Yea, there is a ſecret Joy and Refreſhment in godly Sorrow, equal unto the chiefeſt of our Joys, and a great ſpiritual Satisfaction.

THESE ſeveral Sorts of Perſons, I ſay, are peculiarly called unto that Exerciſe of Faith in Repentance which we enquire after.

BEFORE I proceed to ſhew wherein this ſtate I intend doth conſiſt, and what is required thereunto, which is the laſt thing propoſed, I ſhall premiſe ſome Rules for the right judging of our ſelves with reſpect unto them. As,

1. FAITH will evidence its Truth, (which is that we enquire after) in its ſincere endeavour after the things intended, though its Attainments as unto ſome of them be but mean and low: Yea, a ſenſe of its coming ſhort in a full anſwering of them or Compliance with them, is a great Ingredient in that ſtate called unto: If therefore Faith keep up this deſign in the Soul, with a ſincere purſuit of it, though it fail in many things, and is not ſenſible

ſible of any great Progreſs it makes, it will therein evidence its Sincerity.

2. WHEREAS there are ſundry things, as we ſhall ſee, required hereunto, it is not neceſſary that they ſhould be found all equally in all who deſign this State and Frame. Some may be more eminent in one of them, ſome in another; ſome may have great Helps and Furtherances unto ſome of them in a peculiar manner, and ſome great Obſtructions in the Exerciſe of ſome of them. But it is required, that they be all radically in the Heart, and be put forth in Exerciſe ſometimes on their proper Occaſions.

3. THIS ſtate in the Deſcription of it will ſufficiently diſtinguiſh it ſelf from that Diſcontent of Mind whereon ſome withdraw themſelves from the Occaſions of Life, rather condemning others than themſelves on meer Wearineſs of the Diſappointments of the World, which hath caſt ſome into crooked Paths.

THE firſt thing required hereunto is Weanedneſs from the World: The Rule of moſt men is, that all things are well enough with them, with reſpect unto the World, whilſt they keep themſelves from known particular ſins, in the uſe of the things of it; whilſt they do ſo in their own Apprehenſions, they care not how much they cleave unto it, are even ſwallowed up in the Buſineſſes and Occaſions of it. Yea, ſome will pretend unto, and make an Appearance of a Courſe of Life more than ordinarily ſtrict, whilſt their Hearts and Affections cleave viſibly to this world, and the things of it. But the Foundation of the Work of Faith we enquire into muſt be laid in Mortificaton, and Weanedneſs from the World.

IN Antient Times, ſundry Perſons deſigned a ſtrict

ſtrict Courſe of Mortification and Penitence, and they always laid the Foundation of it in a Renunciation of the World, but they fell moſt of them into a threefold Miſtake, which ruined the whole Undertaking. For,

1. THEY fell into a Neglect of ſuch natural and moral Duties as were indiſpenſibly required of them: They forſook all Care of Duties belonging unto them in their Relations, as Fathers, Children, Husbands, Wives, and the like, betaking themſelves into Solitudes, and hereby alſo they loſt all that Political and Chriſtian Uſefulneſs which the Principles of Humane Society and of our Religion do oblige us unto: They took themſelves unto a Courſe of Life rendring the moſt important Chriſtian Duties, ſuch as reſpect other Men of all ſorts, in all fruits of Love, utterly impoſſible unto them: They could be no more uſeful nor helpful in the Places and Circumſtances wherein they were ſet by Divine Providence; which was a way wherein they could not expect any Bleſſing from God. No ſuch thing is required unto that Renunciation of the World which we deſign; with nothing that ſhould render Men uſeleſs unto all men doth Chriſtian Duties interfere. We are ſtill to uſe the World whilſt we are in it, but not abuſe it: As we have Opportunity, we muſt ſtill do good unto all. Yea, none will be ſo ready to the Duties of Life, as thoſe who are moſt mortified to the World: Thoughts of Retirement from Uſefulneſs, unleſs a great Decay of outward ſtrength, are but Temptations.

2. THEY engaged themſelves into a number of Obſervances no where required of them; ſuch were their outward Auſterities, Faſtings, Choice of

of Meats, Times of Prayer, whereunto at length Self-maceration and Diſciplines were added. In a Scrupulous Superſtitious Obervance of theſe things, their whole deſign at length iſſued, giving riſe and Occaſion unto innumerable Evils. Faith directs to no ſuch thing, it guides to no Duty, but according to the Rule of the Word.

3. AT length they began to engage themſelves by Vow, into ſuch peculiar Orders and Rules of a pretended Religious Life as were by ſome of their Leaders preſented unto them, and this ruined the whole.

HOWEVER, the Original Deſign was good, namely, ſuch a Renuntiation of the World as might keep it and all the things of it from being an hindrance unto us, in an humble Walk before God, or any thing that belongs thereunto: We are to be crucified unto the World, and the World unto us, by the Croſs of Chriſt, we are to be ſo in a peculiar manner, if we are under the Conduct of Faith, in a way of Humiliation and Repentance: And the things enſuing are required hereunto.

1. THE Mortification of our Affections unto the deſirable things of this Life; they are naturally keen and ſharp, ſet upon them, and do tenaciouſly adhere vnto them: Eſpecially they are ſo when things have an Inlet into them by nearneſs of Relation, as Husbands, Wives, Children, and the like. Perſons are apt to think they can never love them enough, never do enough for them; and it is granted, they are to be preferred above all other earthly things; but where they fill and poſſeſs the Heart, where they weaken and obtund the Affections unto things Spiritual, Heavenly,

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and Eternal, unleſs we are mortified unto them, the Heart will never be in a good Frame, nor is capable of that degree in the Grace of Repentance which we ſeek. It is ſo with the moſt as unto all other uſeful things in this World, as Wealth, Eſtates, and Peace: Whilſt they are converſant about them, as they ſuppoſe in a lawful manner, they think they can never over-value them, nor cleave too cloſe unto them.

BUT here we muſt begin, if we intend to take any one Step into this holy Retirement. The Edge of our Affections and Deſires muſt be taken off from theſe things: And hereunto three things are neceſſary.

1. A conſtant, clear View and Judgment of their Uncertainty, Emptineſs, and Diſability to give any Reſt or Satisfaction. Uncertain Riches, uncertain Enjoyments, periſhing Things, paſſing away, yea, Snares, Burthens, Hindrances, the Scripture repreſents them to be, and ſo they are. If the Mind were continually charged home with this conſideration of them, it would daily abate its Delight and Satisfaction in them.

2. A conſtant Endeavour for Conformity unto Chriſt crucified, it is the Croſs of Chriſt whereby we are crucified unto the World and all things in it. When the Mind is much taken up with Thoughts of Chriſt as dying, how and for what he dyed, if it hath any Spark of ſaving Faith in it, it will turn away the Eyes from looking on the deſirable things of this World, with any delightful friendly Aſpect. Things will appear unto it as dead and diſcoloured.

3. THE fixing of them ſteadily on things ſpiritual and eternal, whereof I have diſcourſed at large

large elsewhere: The whole of this Advice is given us by the Apostle, *Col.* 3. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

HEREIN Faith begins its Work, this is the first Lesson it takes out of the Gospel; namely, that of Self-denial, whereof this Mortification is a principal part. Herein it labours to cast off every Burthen, and the Sin that doth so easily beset us. Unless some good Degree be attained here, all further Attempts in this great Duty will be fruitless. Do you then, any of you, judge your selves under any of those Qualifications before mentioned, which render this Duty and Work of Faith necessary unto you? sit down here at the Threshold, and reckon with your selves, that unless you can take your Hearts more off from the World, unless your Affections and Desires be mortified and crucified, and dead in you, in a sensible degree and measure, unless you endeavour every day to promote the same frame in your Minds, you will live and dye Strangers to this Duty.

2. THIS Mortification of our Affections towards these things, our Love, Desire, and Delight, will produce a Moderation of Passions about them, as Fear, Anger, Sorrow, and the like; such will Men be stirred up unto, in those Changes, Losses, Crosses, which these things are subject unto. They are apt to be tender and soft in those things; they take every thing to Heart, every Affliction and Disappointment is aggravated, as if none almost had such things befall them as themselves: Every thing puts them into a Commotion: Hence are they often surprized with Anger about Trifles, influenced by Fear in all Changes, with other turbulent Passions; hence are Men morose, peevish, froward, apt to be displeased, and take offence on

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all Occasions; the subduing of this Frame, the casting out of these Dispositions and perverse Inclinations, is part of the Work of Faith. When the Mind is weaned from the World and the things of it, it will be sedate, quiet, composed, not easily moved with the Occurences and Occasions of Life: It is dead unto them, and in a great measure inconcerned in them; this is that Moderation of Mind wherein the Apostle would have us excel, *Phil.* 4. 5. For he would have it so eminent as that it might appear unto all Men, that is, who are concerned in us, as Relations, Families, and other Societies; this is that which principally renders us useful and exemplary in this World; and for the want whereof many Professors fill themselves and others with Disquietments, and give Offence unto the World it self. This is required of all Believers, but they will be eminent in it in whom Faith works this Weanedness from the World, in order unto a peculiar Exercise of Repentance.

3. THERE is required hereunto an Unsollicitousness about present Affairs and future Events: There is nothing given us in more strict Charge in the Scripture, than that we should be careful in nothing, sollicitous about nothing, take no thought for to morrow, but to commit all things unto the sovereign Disposal of our God and Father, who hath taken all these things into his own Care. But so it is come to pass, through the Vanity of the minds of Men, that what should be nothing unto them is almost their all. Care about things present, and Sollicitousness about things to come, in private and publick Concerns, take up most of their Thoughts and Contrivan-

ces: But this also will Faith subdue on this Occasion, where it tends unto the Promotion of Repentance, by weanedness from the World. It will bring the Soul into a constant, steady, universal Resignation of it self unto the Pleasure of God, and Satisfaction in his Will. Hereon it will use the World as if it used it not, with an absolute Inconcernment in it, as unto what shall fall out. This is that which our Saviour presseth so at large, and with so many divine Reasonings, *Mat.* 6. 25, to the 34.

4. A constant Preferrence of the Duties of Religion before and above the Duties and Occasions of Life: These things will continually interfere, if a diligent Watch be not kept over them, and they will contend for preferrence; and their Success is according to the Interest and Estimation which the things themselves have in our Minds: If the Interest of the World be there prevalent, the Occasions of it will be preferred before Religious Duties; and they shall for the most part be put off unto such Seasons wherein we have nothing else to do, and it may be fit for little else. But where the Interest of spiritual Things prevails, it will be otherwise, according to the Rule given us by our Blessed Saviour; *Seek first the Kingdom of God and the Righteousness thereof*, &c. *Mat.* 6. 33.

I confess this Rule is not absolute, as unto all Seasons and Occasions, there may be a Time wherein the Observation of the Sabbath must give place to the pulling an Ox or an Ass out of a Pit; and on all such Occasions the Rule is, that Mercy is to be preferred before Sacrifice. But in the ordinary Course of our Walking before God, Faith will take Care that a due Attendance unto

unto all Duties of Religion be preferred to all the Occasions of this Life; they shall not be shuffled off on trifling Pretences, nor cast into such unseasonable seasons as otherwise they will be. There also belongs unto that Weanedness from this World which is necessary unto an Eminency in degrees of Humiliation and Repentance, Watching unto Prayer.

5. WILLINGNESS and Readiness to part with all for Christ and the Gospel, this is the animating Principle of the great Duty of taking up the Cross, and Self-denial therein: Without some measure of it in Sincerity, we cannot be Christ's Disciples: But in the present Case there is an Eminent Degree, which Christ calls the hating of all things in comparison of him, that is required; such a Readiness as rejects with Contempt all arguing against it, such as renders the World no Burthen unto it in any part of our Race; such as establisheth a determinate Resolution in the Mind, that as God calls, the World and all the Concernments of it should be forsaken for Christ and the Gospel. Our Countenances and Discourses on Difficulties do not argue that this Resolution is prevalent in us, but so it is required in that work of Faith which we are in the Consideration of.

6. A second thing that belongs hereunto, is a peculiar Remembrance of Sin, and Converse about it in our Minds, with Self-displicency and Abhorrency. God hath promised in his Covenant, that he will remember our Sins no more; that is, to punish them; but it doth not thence follow that we should no more remember them, to be humbled for them. Repentance respects

Sin always; wherever therefore that is, there will be a continual calling Sin to remembrance; ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *My Sin is ever before me.*

THERE is a threefold Calling our paſt Sins unto remembrance:

1. WITH Delight and Contentment; thus is it with proffligate Sinners, whoſe Bodies are grown unſerviceable unto their youthful Luſts; they call over their former Sins, roll them over in their Minds, expreſs their Delight in them by their Words, and have no greater Trouble but that for the want of Strength or Opportunity they cannot ſtill live in the Practiſe of them; this is to be old in Wickedneſs, and to have their Bones filled with the Sins of their Youth: So do many in this Age, delight in filthy Communication, unclean Society, and all Incentives of Luſt: A fearful Sign of being given over unto a Reprobate Mind, an Heart that cannot repent.

2. THERE is a remembrance of Sin unto Diſquietment, Terror and Deſpair: Where Mens Conſciences are not ſeared with an hot Iron, Sin will viſit their Minds ever and anon with a troubleſome remembrance of it ſelf, with its Aggravating Circumſtances. For the moſt part Men hide themſelves from this Viſitor, they are not at home, not at leiſure to converſe with it, but ſhift it off like inſolvent Debtors, from day to day, with a few tranſient Thoughts and Words. But ſometimes it will not be ſo put off, it will come with an Arreſt, or a Warrant from the Law of God, that ſhall make them ſtand and give an Account of themſelves: Hereon they are filled with Diſquietments, and ſome with Horror and Deſpair, which they ſeek to patify and divert themſelves from, by farther emerging themſelves

ſelves in the Purſuit of their Luſts, the Caſe of *Cain*, Gen. 4. 13, 16, 17.

3. THERE is a calling former Sins to remembrance, as a Furtherance of Repentance, and ſo they are a threefold Glaſs unto the Soul, wherein it hath a trebble Object.

1. IT ſees in them the depravation of its Nature, the evil Quality of that Root which hath brought forth ſuch Fruit: And they ſee in it their own Folly, how they were cheated by Sin and Sathan; they ſee the Unthankfulneſs and Unkindneſs towards God wherewith they were accompanied: This fills them with holy Shame, *Rom.* 6. 21. This is uſeful and neceſſary unto Repentance. Perhaps if Men did more call over their former Sins and Miſcarriages than they do, they would walk more humbly and warily than they do for the moſt part. So *David* in his Age prays for a renewed Senſe of the Pardon of the ſins in his Youth, *Pſal.* 25. 7.

2. THE Soul ſees in them a repreſentation of the Grace, Patience, and pardoning Mercy of God: Thus and thus was it with me, God might juſtly have caſt me off for ever; he might have cut me off in the midſt of theſe ſins, ſo as that I ſhould have had no leiſure to have cried for Mercy; and perhaps ſome of them were Sins long continued in. O the infinite Patience of God that ſpared me! the infinite Grace and Mercy of God that forgave unto me theſe provoking Iniquities! This Frame is expreſſed *Pſal.* 103. 3, 4.

3. THE Soul ſees herein the efficacy of the Mediation and Blood of Chriſt, 1 *Joh.* 2. 2. Whence is it that I have deliverance from the Guilt of theſe ſins? that way was made for the advancing of Grace in

the Pardon of them? Whence is it that my Soul and Conſcience are purged from the ſtain and filth of them? Here the whole Glory of the Love and Grace of Chriſt in his Mediation, with the Worth of the Attonement that he made, and the Ranſom that he paid, with the Efficacy of his Blood to purge us from all our ſins, is repreſented unto the Mind of the Believer: So out of the Eater comes forth Meat, and hereby a Reconciliation is made between the deepeſt Humiliation, and a refreſhing Senſe of the Love of God, and Peace with him.

THIS therefore a Soul which is engaged into the Paths of Repentance will conſtantly apply it ſelf unto: And it is Faith alone whereunto we are beholding for the Views of theſe things in ſin; in no other Light will they be ſeen therein: Their Aſpect in any other is horrid and terrifying, ſuited only to fill the Soul with Dread and Horror, and Thoughts of Flying from God: But this View of them is ſuited to ſtir up all Graces unto an holy Exerciſe.

3. HEREON Godly Sorrow will enſue; this indeed is the very Life and Soul of Repentance, ſo the Apoſtle declares it, 2 *Cor.* 7. 9, 10, 11. And it comprizeth all that is ſpoken in the Scripture about a broken Heart and a contrite Spirit, which expreſſeth it ſelf by Sighs, Tears, Mourning, yea, watering our Beds with Tears, and the like. *David* giveth ſo great an Inſtance in himſelf hereof, and that ſo frequently repeated, as that we need no other Exemplification of it. I ſhall not at large inſiſt upon it, but only ſhew (1.) What it doth reſpect; And (2.) Wherein it doth conſiſt, (3.) How Faith works it in the Soul. (1.) What

it

it doth respect: And it hath a twofold Object:

1. SUCH past sins as by reason of their own Nature or their Aggravations, have left the greatest Impressions on Conscience: It respects indeed in general all past and known Sins that can be called to remembrance, but usually in the course of Mens Lives there have been some sins whose Wounds on various Accounts have been most deep and sensible, these are the especial Objects of this Godly Sorrow; so was it with *David* in the whole Course of his Life, after his great fall, he still bewailed his Miscarriage therein: The like respect he had unto the other sins of his Youth; and none have been so preserved, but they may fix on some such Provocation as may be a just Cause of this Sorrow all their days.

2. IT respects the daily Incursions of Infirmities in Failings, Negligences in our Frames or Actions, such as the best are subject to; these are a matter of continual Sorrow and Mourning to a gracious Soul that is engaged in this Duty and way of Repentance.

(2.) WHEREIN it doth consist; and the things following do concur therein:

1. SELF-JUDGING; this is the Ground and Spring of all Godly Sorrow, and thereon of Repentance, turning away the Displeasure of God, 1 *Cor.* 11, 31. This the Soul doth continually with reference unto the Sins mentioned; it passeth Sentence on it self every day: This cannot be done without Grief and Sorrow; for although the Soul finds it a necessary Duty, and is thereon well pleased with it, and yet all such Self-reflections are like Afflictions, not joyous but grievous.

2. THE immediate Effect hereof is constant Humiliation; He that so judgeth himself, knows

what frame of Mind and Spirit becomes him thereon: This takes away the Ground from all Pride, Elation of Mind, Self-pleasing; where this Self-judging is constant they can have no place: This is that Frame of Mind which God approves so highly, and hath made such Promises unto; the Humble are every where proposed as the especial Object of his own Care, his Respect is to them that are of a broken Heart, and of a contrite Spirit: And this will grow on no other Root. No man by his utmost Diligence on any Argument or Consideration shall be able to bring himself into that humble frame wherein God is delighted, unless he lay the Foundation of it in continual Self-judging, on the Account of former and present sins. Men may put on a Fashion, Frame, and Garb of Humility; but really humble they are not; where this is wanting, Pride is in the Throne, in the Heart, though Humility be in the Countenance and Deportment: And herein doth this godly Sorrow much consist.

3. THERE is in it a real Trouble and Disquietment of Mind, for Sorrow is an Afflictive Passion; it is contrary to that Compose which the Mind would constantly be at. Howbeit this Trouble is not such as is opposed unto Spiritual Peace and Refreshment, for it is an Effect of Faith, and Faith will produce nothing that is really inconsistent with Peace with God, or that shall impeach it; but it is opposite unto other Comforts. It is a Trouble that all earthly things cannot take off and remove. This Trouble of his mind in his Sorrow for Sin, *David* on all Occasions expresseth unto God; and sometimes it riseth to a great and dreadful Height, as it is expressed *Psal.* 88.

88. throughout. Hereby the Soul is ſometimes overwhelmed, yet ſo as to relieve it ſelf by pouring out its Complaint before the Lord, *Pſal.* 102. 1.

4. THIS inward Frame of Trouble, Mourning, and Contriteneſs, will expreſs it ſelf on all juſt Occaſions, by the outward Signs of Sighs, Tears, and mournful Complaints, *Pſal.* 31. 10. So *David* continually mentions his Tears on the like Account, and *Peter* on the review of his Sin wept bitterly; as *Mary* waſhed the Feet of Chriſt with her Tears, as we ſhould all do, a Soul filled with Sorrow will run over and expreſs its inward frame by theſe outward ſigns. I ſpeak not of thoſe Self-whole jolly Profeſſors which theſe days abound with, but ſuch as Faith engageth in this Duty will on all Occaſions abound in theſe things. I fear there is amongſt us too great a Pretence, that Mens natural Tempers and Conſtitutions are incompliant with theſe things: Where God makes the Heart, ſoft and godly Sorrow doth not only ſometimes viſit it, but dwell in it, it will not be wholly wanting in theſe Expreſſions of it; and what it comes ſhort of one way, it may make up in another; whatever the Caſe be as to Tears, it is certain that to multiply Sighs and Groans for ſin, is contrary to no Mans Conſtitution, but only to ſin ingrafted in his Conſtitution.

5. THIS Godly Sorrow will conſtantly incite the Mind unto all Duties, Acts and Fruits of Repentance whatever; it is never barren nor heartleſs, but being both a Grace and a Duty, it will ſtir up the Soul unto the Exerciſe of all Graces, and the Performance of all Duties that are of the ſame

ſame kind: This the Apoſtle declares fully, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11.

THIS therefore is another thing which belongs unto that ſtate of Repentance which Faith will bring the Soul unto, and whereby it will evidence it ſelf on the Occaſions before-mentioned: And indeed if this Sorrow be conſtant and opperative, there is no clearer Evidence in us of ſaving Faith. They are bleſſed who thus mourn: I had almoſt ſaid, it is worth all other Evidences, as that without which they are none at all; where this Frame is not in ſome good meaſure, the Soul can have no pregnant Evidence of its good Eſtate.

4. ANOTHER thing that belongs to this ſtate, is outward Obſervances becoming it; ſuch are Abſtinence unto the due Mortification of the Fleſh; not in ſuch things or ways as are hurtful unto Nature, and really obſtructive of greater Duties: There have been great Miſtakes in this matter, moſt men have fallen into Extreams about it, as is uſual with the moſt in like Caſes; they did retain in the Papacy, from the Beginning of the Apoſtacy of the Church, from the Rule of the Scripture, an Opinion of the Neceſſity of Mortification unto a Penitent State; but they miſtook the Nature of it, and placed it for the moſt part in that which the Apoſtle calls the Doctrine of Devils, when he foretold Believers of that Hypocritical Apoſtacy, 1 *Tim.* 4. 1, 2, 3. Forbiding to marry, engaging one ſort of men by Vows againſt the uſe of that Ordinance of God for all men, and enjoyning Abſtinence from Meats in various Laws and Rules, under pretence of great Auſterity, was the Subſtance of their Mortification: Hereunto they added Habits,

bits, Fasting, Disciplines, Rough Garments, and the like, pretended self-macerations innumerable. But the Vanity of this Hypocrisie hath been long since detected, but therewithall most men are fallen into the other Extream: Men do generally judge that they are at their full Liberty in and for the Use of the things esteemed Refreshments of Nature; yea, they judge themselves not to be obliged unto any Retrenchment, in Garments, Diet, with the free use of all things in themselves lawful, when they are under the greatest necessity of Godly Sorrow, and express Repentance. But there is here a no less pernicious Mistake than in the former Excess, and it is that which our Lord Jesus Christ gives us in Charge to watch against, *Luk.* 22. 34, 35, 36.

THIS therefore, I say, is required unto the state we enquire after; those things which restrain the Satisfaction of the Appetite, with an Aversation of the joyous Enticements of the World, walking heavily and mournfully, expressing an humble and afflicted frame of Spirit, are necessary in such a Season. The Mourners in *Zion* are not to be ashamed of their Lot and State, but to profess it in all suitable outward demonstration of it; not in fantastical Habits and Gestures, like sundry Orders of the Monks; not in affected Forms of Speech and uncouth Deportments, like some among our selves; but in such ways as naturally express the inward Frame of Mind enquired after.

5. THERE is required hereunto a firm watch over Solitudes and Retirements of the Night and Day, with a continual readiness to conflict Temptations in their first Appearance, that the Soul be not surprized by them; the great design in

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the Exercise of this Grace, is to keep and preserve the Soul constantly in an humble and contrite frame, if that be lost at any time, the whole design is for that Season disappointed: Wherefore Faith engageth the mind to watch against two things; (1.) The times wherein we may lose this Frame. (2.) The means whereby. And,

(1.) FOR the times; there are none to be so diligently watched over as our Sollitudes and Retirements by night or by day: What we are in them, that we are indeed, and no more; they are either the best or the worst of our times, wherein the Principle that is predominant in us will shew and act it self; hence some are said *to devise Evil on their Beds, and when the Morning is light they practise it*, Mich. 2. 1. Their Sollitude in the Night serves them to think on, contrive, and delight in all that Iniquity which they intend by day to practise, according to their Power. And on the other side, the Work of a gracious Soul in such Seasons is to be seeking after Christ, *Cant.* 3. 1. To be meditating of God, as the *Psalmist* often expresseth it. This therefore the humble Soul is diligently watchful in, that at such Seasons vain Imaginations which are apt to obtrude themselves on the mind, do not carry it away, and cause it to lose its Frame, though but for a Season; yea, these are the times which it principally lays hold on for its improvement: Then doth it call over all those Considerations of Sin and Grace which are meet to affect it and abase it.

(2.) FOR the means of the Loss of an humble frame, they are Temptations; these labour to possess the mind either by sudden surprizals, or continued Solicitations. A Soul engaged by Faith

Faith in this Duty is aware always of their Deceit and Violence; it knows that if they enter into it, and do entangle it, though but for a ſeaſon, they will quite caſt out or deface that humble, contrite, broken frame, which it is its duty to preſerve: And there is none who hath the leaſt grain of ſpiritual Wiſdom, but may underſtand of what ſort theſe Temptations are which he is obnoxious unto; here then Faith ſets the Soul on its Watch and Guard continually, and makes it ready to combate every Temptation on its firſt Appearance, for then it is weakeſt and moſt eaſily to be ſubdued; it will ſuffer them to get neither time, nor ground, nor ſtrength: So it preſerves an humble Frame, delivers it frequently from the Jaws of this Devourer.

6. ALTHOUGH the Soul finds Satisfaction in this Condition, though it be never ſinfully weary of it, nor impatient under it; yea, though it labour to grow and thrive in the Spirit and Power of it, yet it is conſtantly accompanied with deep Sighs and Groanings for its deliverance: And theſe groanings reſpect both what it would be delivered from, and what it would attain unto; between which there is an Interpoſition of ſome ſighs and groans of Nature, for a continuance in its preſent ſtate.

1. THAT which this Groaning reſpects Deliverance from, is the remaining Power of ſin; this is that which gives the Soul its Diſtreſs and Diſquietment: Occaſionally indeed its Humility, Mourning, and Self-Abaſement are encreaſed by it, but this is thro' the Efficacy of the Grace of Chriſt Jeſus: In its own Nature it tends to hurt and ruine; this the Apoſtle emphatically expreſſeth in his own Perſon, as bearing the place and ſtate of other Believers, *Ro.* 7. 24.

AND this conſtant groaning for deliverance from the

the power of sin, excites the Soul to pursue it unto its destruction: No Effect of Faith, such as this is, is heartless or fruitless, it will be opperative towards what it aims at; and that in this case is the not being of sin; this the Soul groans after, and therefore contends for; this is the Work of Faith, and *Faith without Works is dead*; wherefore it will continually pursue sin unto all its Retirements and Reserves. As it can have no rest from it, so it will give neither Rest nor Peace unto it; yea, a constant design after the not being of sin, is a blessed Evidence of a saving Faith.

2. THAT which it looks after, is the full Enjoyment of Glory, *Rom.* 8. 23. This indeed is the Grace and Duty of all Believers, of all who have received the first Fruits of the Spirit; they all in their measure groan, that their very Bodies may be delivered from being the subject and seat of sin, that they may be redeemed out of that Bondage: It is a Bondage to the very Body of a Believer to be instrumental unto sin: This we long for its perfect deliverance from, which shall compleat the Grace of Adoption in the whole person; But it is most eminent in those who excel in a state of Humiliation and Repentance; they, if any, groan earnestly; this they sigh, breath, and pant after continually; and their Views of the Glory that shall be revealed, gives them refreshment in their deepest Sorrows; they wait for the Lord herein more than they that wait for the morning. Do not blame a truly penitent Soul, if he longs to be dissolved: The Greatness and Excellency of the Change which he shall have thereby, is his present Life and Relief.

3. BUT there is a Weight on this Desire, by the Interposition of Nature, for the Continuation of its present Being, which is inseparable from it:

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But Faith makes a Reconciliation of these repugnant Inclinations, keeping the Soul from Weariness and Impatience; and this it doth by reducing the mind unto its proper Rock: It lets it know that it ought not absolutely to be under the Conduct of either of these Desires. *First*, it keeps them from Excess, by teaching the Soul to regulate them both by the Word of God; this it makes the Rule of such Desires and Inclinations, which whilst they are regulated by, we shall not offend in them: And it mixeth a Grace with them both that makes them useful, namely, constant Submission to the Will of God; this Grace would have, and this Nature would have; but saith the Soul, the Will and Sovereign Pleasure of God is my Rule: *Not my Will, holy Father, but thy Will be done.* We have the Example of Christ himself in this matter.

7. THE last thing I shall mention, as that which compleats the state described, is abounding in Contemplations of things heavenly, invisible and eternal: None have more holy and humble thoughts than truly penitent Souls, none more high and heavenly Contemplations; you would take them to be all sighs, all mourning, all dejection of Spirit; but none are more above, none more near the high and lofty one: As he dwells with them, *Isa.* 57. 15. so they dwell with him in a peculiar manner, by these Heavenly Contemplations. Those who have lowest thoughts of themselves, and are most filled with Self-abasement, have the clearest Views of Divine Glory. The Bottom of a Pit or Well gives the best Prospect of the Heavenly Luminaries: And the Soul in its deepest Humiliations, hath for the most part the clearest Views of things within the Vail.

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